Husband buys wife bizarre anniversary gift - it unsurprisingly ends on up eBay

10:24, 10 Oct 2016 Updated 10:26, 10 Oct 2016 By Zahra Mulroy

mirror.co.uk

"Misguided" husband buys his wife bizarre first anniversary gift - it unsurprisingly ends on eBay

Say it flowers, say it with chocolates, say it with breakfast in bed or even a home-made card if you're brassic. But don't ever, under any circumstance, say it with taxidermy .

Or, if you do, be aware it may very well end up in the bin, or on eBay.

While your first anniversary is bound to be special and memorable, 'paper' probably isn't the most thrilling of substances.

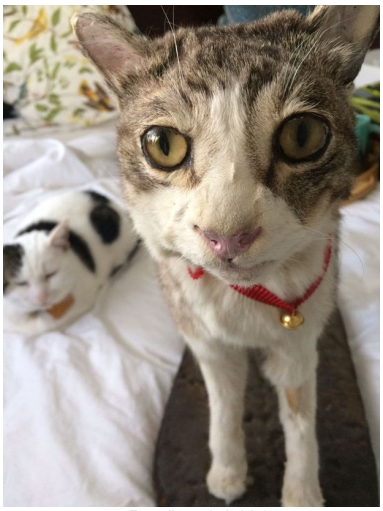
That said, there's no reason to go massively off-piste with a romantic gesture , like one, erm, imaginative husband.

Two years ago, his wife, known only as Catherine, was gifted a taxidermy cat for their first wedding anniversary .

Here he is

N.b. That's a real, alive-and-breathing cat in the background of the photo, by the way.

Luckily Catherine saw the funny side and although she did put it up for sale on Ebay , the accompanying description was very amusing - and very apt.



eBay/lesniak196

How romantic?

"My husband garbage picked a very badly taxidermied cat for me for our first wedding anniversary, because nothing says I love you like' your favourite animal, only dead."

"It was clearly someone's (elderly) pet, and its tragic gaze is hauntingly beautiful in a way. Not a way that I want in my house, but I imagine someone might."

And some does indeed want to see that tragic gaze every day. Bidding has in fact ended on the item and it sold for £102.

Catherine did manage to hold on to the cat (called Paper) for an impressive two years, but in the end worried, "about the long term psychological effects on my two (alive) cats, who have now accepted living with a dead, badly stuffed relative as normal."

DailyMirror

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Woman reveals how she cuts herself to feed her VAMPIRE boyfriend

thesun.co.uk

Florist Blut who has travelled the world to satisfy blood-suckers and met Vampire King Michael two years ago

By Alison Maloney
29th September 2016, 10:15 am

A YOUNG florist has revealed that she allows herself to be cut all over her body in order to feed her VAMPIRE lover.

Blut Katzchen – who has travelled the world to satisfy bloodsuckers for over ten years – has now found love with self-proclaimed 'Vampire King' Michael Vachmiel, 44.



Blut and Michael met at a Vampire Ball two years ago

7
Blut and Michael met at a Vampire Ball two years ago

As a "Black Swan" –someone who willingly offers blood to those who feed on it – the 28-year-old allows him to cut her with razors so he drink the blood to gain "energy".

She said: "I have always been entranced with the whole vampire culture since I was very young.

"I found a book on vampires in my sister's collection and became completely entranced with it.

"It takes a very specific type of mindset to enjoy being a swan – you have to be more submissive and enjoy giving."



Michael cuts Blut's back so he can suck her blood

7
Michael cuts Blut's back so he can suck her blood

Blut, from Lousiana, US, told Channel 4's World of Weird how she met Michael at a Vampire Ball in Houston, Texas, and they became lovers.

She said: "You have to have a very strong connection to the person who is feeding off you.

"Michael and I have a very intimate relationship and I trust him completely."

7
The couple use razors and suction cups

There are no fangs and neck-biting involved in the blood-letting process. Instead, Michael cuts her with a sharp blade and uses suction cups to draw the blood out.

She said: "You have to have a very strong connection to the person who is feeding off you. I have specific tools that draw the blood and Michael will drink it from my body.

"The cuts are about an inch long – it doesn't take a very deep cut to draw the blood."

7


The couple use razors and suction cups


Michael makes cuts on her back and shoulders

Michael makes cuts on her back and shoulders

Blut lays on her stomach and Michael draws blood from her shoulders or back, but she insists that the whole process is safe and clean.

She said: "We sterilise the area with alcohol and he uses mouthwash before drinking, so it's very clean.

"There are some risks involved, but we do everything we can to keep it as clean as possible.

"I've been doing this for almost thirteen years and I have never had an STD or blood-borne illness scare.

A woman who cuts herself to feed her vampire boyfriend on Channel 4's World of Weird


The couple sterilise the area before Michael drinks

7
The couple sterilise the area before Michael drinks

"It's a release like any other release people seek - if you're getting something out of it and the drinker is too then I don't see a problem with it.

"It's a spiritual thing for me - to be able to give energy to someone even if it's a small bit is an extremely liberating feeling."

She also claims the amount he takes is small.

She said: "If you drink too much you do get sick - it doesn't take much blood for Michael to get his energy."


Michael calls himself the Vampire King

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Michael calls himself the Vampire King

Michael started drinking blood at the young age of 13, and does this type of feeding a few times a year.

He said: "I started drinking blood by accident - it was during an intense sexual act where blood was drawn and touched my lips. At that point it was an awakening.

"Just like a person has a favourite culinary dish, vampires have a favourite spiritual culinary dish.

"There are many ways to get energy, this is a more intimate way and its a ritual for vampires.

"In doing such, we get the energy we need and the donor has their need to submit, so it's completely consensual."

7
Michael started drinking blood at 13



Michael started drinking blood at 13

Comments

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'Vampire' man who sexually abused teen gets probation

wpxi.com

- Updated: Aug 25, 2016 - 7:18 PM

'Vampire' man who sexually abused teen gets probation http://on.wpxi.com/2cc0XF3

VANDERGRIFT, Pa. - A 22-year-old Vandergrift man who had sex with a teen and made other young girls drink his blood was sentenced to probation on Thursday.

Jonathan Davis was convicted of having sex with a 14-year-old girl in the stairwell of a church. Police said he also sliced the wrists of three juveniles and drank their blood. He was 20 years old at the time.

Loading



share image

Police say Davis orchestrated a "cult-like" group involving three juveniles and several adults in Vandergrift in the fall of 2014. He told police that, after licking each other's blood, he would call them his "bio-child" and he would be their "dad."

He said the role play was based off an online fantasy game.

Davis' attorney said his client has been receiving counseling since being charged.

A judge sentenced Davis to 10 years of supervised probation, two years of house arrest and is requiring him to register as a sex offender for the next 25 years.

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The 96,000 rocking horse worth as much as an Aston Martin

15:38 EST, 9 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

The rocking horse worth as much as an Aston Martin: £98,400 toy comes complete with 82,000 Swarovski crystals

- **'Crystal' the rocking horse is on the market for a staggering £98,400**
- **Toy has silver fittings and is embellished with 82,000 Swarovski crystals**
- **Clients of firm include Madonna, Prince George and Sir Paul McCartney**

By Amie Gordon For Mailonline

A rocking horse embellished in 82,000 Swarovski crystals is set to go on the market for £98,400 - the same price as a new Aston Martin sports car.

As the festive season approaches, people may be looking for unique and extravagant gifts and potential buyers are being invited to 'put in their bids' for the item, which will be on sale in time for Christmas.

Dubbed 'Crystal', the luxury toy - which will be the most expensive item of its kind in the world - was made by specialist rocking horse makers, the Stevenson Brothers.



'Crystal' is the most expensive item of its kind in the world, on sale for around £98,400

The Kent-based firm has made rocking horses for a host of celebrity and Royal clients including Madonna, Sir Paul McCartney and Prince George, who received a zebra rocking horse costing more than £4,000 for Christmas in 2014.

But this week, the firm revealed its 'masterpiece' - the steel grey dappled horse, with black oak runners, fittings made of silver and 82,000 Swarovski crystals.

For the same price buyers could purchase a Aston Martin Vantage V8S. Capable of reaching speeds up to 180mph, going from 0-60mph in just over four seconds, the vehicles sell from around £90,000 upwards.

Marc Stevenson, who took six months to hand-craft the rocking horse, said: 'When light shines on the horse it's like the most awesome glitter ball ever.'

'Masterpiece': The steel grey dappled horse has black oak runners, fittings made of silver and 82,000 Swarovski crystals



He said he was inspired by the glitzy costumers worn by ballroom dancers like on Strictly Come Dancing: 'We had been waiting to do something as amazing as this in the 34 years since the company was formed.'

He added: 'She can be seen in Stevenson Brothers Showroom in Bethersden Kent, and will be going to Monaco, then she will be available in Harrods Private Buyers Department'.

He also revealed Crystal will be followed by a one-off rocking Zebra and a miniature unicorn.

Mr Stevenson, who runs the firm with his twin brother Tony, added: 'Companies have used Swarovski crystals on iPhone covers and Mercedes cars but they have never been used on a rocking horse.

'One of the challenges was working out which glue would make the crystals stick best so we practised sticking them on panels to find the best glue.

'We used 82,000 crystals on the rocking horse and they will stay on for ever.'

The Stevenson Brother's website states: 'It gives us great pleasure to introduce Crystal.

'This unique steel grey rocking horse was hand-embellished by Fernandes Exquisite Creations with over 80,000 Swarovski crystals which shimmer, shine and sparkle.'

Comments (

Potatopeeler, Burnley, Netherlands, about an hour ago

For that price i'd want rocking horse sheet included.

mary, Whitton, about 3 hours ago

Swarovski? Bit common.

Miss Happy, London, France, about 3 hours ago

Death by rocking horse - looks like something from hell

Classy Girl, Liverpool, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

Whoever buys this has more money than sense!!

Chicken Goat, Lamb of leg, Micronesia, about 3 hours ago

Cynics

Fradgley, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

Neigh way will be my kids be riding that!

Tracey-Lee, Melbourne, Australia, about 3 hours ago

Possibly the ugliest rocking horse I've ever seen. It looks scary. Check out its mouth - it looks terrified!

Commonsenserulesok, The frozen north, United Kingdom, about 5 hours ago

In bad taste, considering the images we see of children in Aleppo. I'm sure they don't give two hoots about a sparkly rocking horse.

Chalkwizard, Newcastle, about 5 hours ago

Costs isn't the same as worth.

I miss old England, Jalapa, United States, about 6 hours ago

The wealthy have their trinkets. The poor have the nanny state. And the wealth/poverty gap widens.

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2 Injured After Commercial Airliner Forced To Evade 'UFO'

huffingtonpost.com

The object may have been a balloon or drone.

11/15/2016 11:28 pm ET



A Porter Alrlines aircraft similar to the one in this image took evasive action on Monday to avoid an unidentified flying object, possibly a drone or balloon, while descending into the Toronto area.

Two people suffered minor injuries after an aircraft swerved to avoid a “UFO” in the skies over Lake Ontario on Monday.

The Porter Airlines Dash 8 aircraft, which was carrying 54 passengers, encountered the object at about 9,000 feet as it descended into the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

“The pilots noticed an object in the distance (and) as they approached the object, they realized it was very close to their flight path,” Porter Airlines said in a statement, according to the Canadian Press.

At first the pilots thought it was a balloon. However, after debriefing, they said the object could have been a drone.

“Nobody knows at this point. It happened so quick,” Peter Rowntree, senior regional investigator with the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, told The Star. “It definitely wasn’t a bird. It was a fairly large object.”

Two flight attendants were taken to an area hospital to be treated for minor injuries, the CBC reported.

The Canadian government is now working to pass new rules to regulate the growing number of drones, and possibly help prevent incidents such as this one.

There have been a number of close calls between aircraft and drones around the world, especially near airports. Earlier this year, a British Airways jet struck a drone while approaching London’s Heathrow Airport. No one was injured in that incident.

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There have been 4 reports of creepy clowns the past 2 days in this N.J. town

By Steve Novak | For lehighvalleylive.com | Follow on Twitter on September 27, 2016 at 1:40 PM, updated September 27, 2016 at 5:31 PM nj.com

NJ.com



Phillipsburg police fielded four reports of suspicious clowns, some chasing children, in two days. A sighting was also reported in Wilson Borough. (NJ Advance Media file photo)

Sightings of creepy clowns are spreading throughout the Lehigh Valley, across the Delaware River and now into New Jersey.

Authorities are urging people to keep calm and use their common sense.

"We don't need a society living in fear," Phillipsburg police Capt. Robert Stettner said Tuesday after four reported sightings in town over the past two days. Stettner said police checked and found nothing.

The first was about 8 p.m. Sunday in Walters Park, when three clowns allegedly came out of the woods and chased a child.

Three more were reported Monday in the Warren County community, Stettner said.

At about 5 p.m., someone was seen dressed as a clown on Hudson Street. At 7:45 p.m., a jester holding some kind of sword reportedly ran after a child on Shafer Avenue. And at about 9:30, a dark-colored truck was seen driving down Mercer Street with multiple clowns hanging out the window, according to police.



9 things to know about the clown hysteria

9 things to know about the clown hysteria

The U.S. and social media are abuzz as reports of clown sightings spread from coast to coast. The Lehigh Valley isn't immune.

Also on Monday, a group of children near a Wilson Borough elementary school in Northampton County (Pa.) told police three people dressed as clowns chased them about 3:15 p.m., according to a news release. The clowns reportedly got into a white vehicle and drove south on Front Street. School staff, who were outside for about 30 minutes, didn't see the clowns, borough police Chief Steven Parkansky said.

Police investigated, too, and found no people or vehicles matching the descriptions.

The reports follow two within 12 hours last week in Easton, Pa., and similar sightings in Pottsville, Pa., and Huntingdon County, near Harrisburg.

"There's always a concern that people are copy-catting for the sake of scaring people," Phillipsburg's Stettner said.

There are measures people can take to stay safe.

Parents should talk to their children about walking in groups, Stettner said. And the old rule of not talking to strangers still applies: "You see somebody in a clown mask, don't go talk to them," he said.

If you are approached, get away to someplace safe and report any suspicious activity to police.



Coulrophobia: the fear of clowns

Coulrophobia: the fear of clowns

The fear of clowns dates all the way back to the 1700s.

Stettner also discouraged the idea of "hunting" clowns, saying that the suspicious person may be a juvenile prankster and that violence will lead to more trouble.

"If somebody's running around with a sword," he said, referencing the Shafer Avenue report, "we have more of an issue. (But) people are allowed to walk around with a clown mask."

Phillipsburg police can be reached at 908-454-1121. Anyone with information on the Wilson Borough incident is is asked to call police at 610-258-8746.

Lehighvalleylive.com reporter Tony Rhodin contributed to this report.

Steve Novak may be reached at snovak@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter @type2supernovak and Facebook. Find lehighvalleylive.com on Facebook.

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5 historic hauntings for Halloween

Friday 30th October 2015

historyextra.com

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE Whether you believe in ghosts or not, there is no denying that many hauntings were human, rather than spiritual, mysteries: ghosts were often the product of personal fears, anxieties, lies, crimes and deceits that are often difficult to fathom as historians. Here are five spooky cases for you to consider…

1621: Nunnifying Mary Boucher

Mary Boucher was a London servant woman employed by a Catholic lady. According to the clergyman John Gee (d1639), the lady hatched a plot with three Jesuits to convert Mary to Catholicism, and so have her 'Nunnified'. What better way to persuade Mary to convert to the Catholic faith than to convince her that ghosts returned from purgatory?

One of the conspirators dressed up in a white sheet and approached Mary as she lay in bed one night. The supposed spirit touched Mary with "a hand cold as earth or iron" and claimed to be her long-deceased godmother: "See that you tell my children what you have seen, and how their mother appeared unto you".

When Mary told her mother about the ghostly visitation, she convinced her daughter that it was nothing but a popish trick. But maybe John Gee, who claimed to have visited Mary to verify the story, was making up his own stories to deflect rumours that he himself was in thrall to the papacy…

1650: The haunting of Susan Lay

In 1650 an Essex servant girl named Susan Lay went to her local magistrate in great distress, saying that she was haunted by the ghost of her mistress, Priscilla Beauty, the wife of an alehouse keeper. Lay had given birth to illegitimate children by both Beauty's husband and her son, William. Both children died in infancy.

Priscilla passed away at Easter 1650. Three days after she was buried, Susan – who was then living in the alehouse barn – began to be visited by the pale ghost of her mistress calling to her, "Sue, Sue, Sue". The anguished Susan thought the spirit of her mistress had come back from the dead to punish her for her sins – "oh this woman will be the destruction of me", she said.

When Susan threatened to commit suicide, William told her, "this is a just judgement of God upon you for if she walks, she walks to you and nobody else."

1765: Shrieking and groaning at Hinton Ampner

The haunting of the Manor House at Hinton Ampner, near Alresford, Hampshire, began simply enough with the inexplicable banging of doors. A groom said he had seen an apparition of its former owner, Lord Stawell.

Mary and William Ricketts had purchased the manor in 1765, and soon began to regret it. When William left for a lengthy trip to Jamaica four years later, leaving his wife and three young children, the poltergeist phenomena began to intensify: Mary began to hear footsteps, knocking noises, and the rustle of silk in her bedchamber. By the spring of 1771, mysterious murmurings, groanings, and shrieks plagued the Manor House.

William was still abroad. Mary's brother, Sir John Jervis, came to investigate, but could find no rational cause for the disturbances. The family moved out shortly after, and the house was demolished a few years later.

Was it the ghost of Lord Stawell, or perhaps another previous owner, Sir Hugh Stewkeley? A local pauper had told the family that Stewkeley was rumoured to have buried treasure under the floorboards of the dining room.

c1865: a man clinging to a tree in the face of an apparition in a forest. London Stereoscopic Company Comic Series - 72 (Photo by London Stereoscopic Company/Getty Images).

1834: A ghostly tenancy dispute



In February 1834 four men applied to the Bristol magistrates to nullify the tenancy agreement they had signed because their rooms were haunted. One of the men said he saw the ghosts of two women, one wearing mourning clothes. Another's daughter claimed she also saw the ghost of a woman with light hair and grey eyes, who wore a cap with lace strings. She felt a draft of air as the ghostly woman passed by her bed. As well as these visions, all four tenants complained of a strange blue light appearing in their rooms.

The magistrate tried to convince them that there were no such things as ghosts. But the men refused to believe it, with one of them citing the Reverend John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, as an authority on their reality. Alas, the law could do nothing for the haunted tenants.

1861: A murder revealed by a ghost?

One evening in January 1861, several men and women were gathered at the fireside in the cottage of Joseph Allinson, in Kendal, when terrible knocking sounds emanated from the room above where Joseph's bedridden, purblind wife lay.

The alarmed fireside congregation proceed upstairs to investigate the cause of the mysterious noises. Mrs Allinson revealed to them that she had just been visited by an apparition of a grim, rough-looking man dressed in black. It breathed in her face, causing the bedside candle to burn dim before being extinguished by some unseen hand.

The ghost pointed to the floor and in a thick, husky, hollow voice told her that she must dig under the hearthstone in the cellar, and there she would find something buried. The ghost then vanished.

Joseph and his friends immediately headed down to the cellar to carry out the spirit's instructions. On removing the hearth flagstone they found, just below the surface, a quantity of long-buried bones, thought to be human, and a scattering of hops. Were they the remains of a murder victim? Was the ghost that of the murderer, or the murder victim?

Professor Owen Davies from the University of Hertfordshire specialises in witchcraft, magic, and ghosts from the ancient world to the modern era. He is the author of the forthcoming *Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic* (OUP, 2015) and *America Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft after Salem* (OUP, 2013).

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5,000 Jack-O'-Lanterns Stun In Haunting Halloween Display

huffingtonpost.com

Elaborate pumpkins will be on display around the country.

10/17/2016 12:03 pm ET

If this doesn't light you up, nothin' will.

More than 5,000 hand-carved pumpkins are shining a little extra light on the ghouls and ghosts of the fall season as part of this year's "RISE of the Jack O' Lanterns" display in four cities.

The intricate pumpkins, which each take 10 to 15 hours to carve, are popping up around the country with displays in Los Angeles, New York, New Jersey and Boston.

Those unable to make any of the upcoming events can check out some of the dazzling displays recently seen at the Los Angeles event below:



MARK RALSTON via Getty Images



MARK RALSTON via Getty Images

- A Chinese dragon made from illuminated pumpkins.
- A car made out of pumpkins.
- A display of cars.
- Characters from "Frozen."
- A "Star Wars" display.
- A stormtrooper and giant Darth Vader mask.
- A Batman display.
- A Superman display.
- A pumpkin carved with Donald Trump's face.
- A pumpkin carved with Hillary Clinton's face.
- A bloodthirsty Dracula pumpkin.
- A Gene Wilder (aka Willy Wonka) pumpkin.

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8 kids fall ill; teachers resort to ceremonials | Orissa Post

orissapost.com

Tue November 15, 2016 12:21:44 pm

logo



8 kids fall ill; teachers resort to ceremonials

Kaliapani: In a shocking incident, eight students of Saruabila Upper Primary School in Kansa panchayat in Sukinda mining area of Jajpur took ill all of a sudden and were admitted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where their condition was stated to be critical.

Locals linked the sudden illness of the students with supernatural activity. According to reports, after the prayer class, the students were on their way to their classrooms, but two of them suddenly collapsed on the ground. As they were brought back to their senses with the sprinkling of water, the two mumbled and showed unusual behaviour.

Minutes later, two more girl students fainted, triggering panic among the teachers and other students.
The teachers immediately rushed the four ailing students to a Hanuman temple at Bolani, with the belief that the ‘evil spirit’ possessing the kids can be warded off by divine intervention. As the news spread, thousands of people from various localities thronged the temple.

At about 12 pm, four more students fainted and were brought to the temple. Kaliapani ASI Upendra Das along with other police officials rushed to the spot. Believing that it was a supernatural activity, the locals had also sought the help of a sorcerer and a traditional healer, who spelt charms and mantras, but to no avail.

On seeing their critical condition, police shifted the students to Tata Steel Hospital. As their condition did not improve, the sick students were shifted to SCB. According to villagers, the school was set up on a cremation ground. The students were possessed by ‘apparitions’, they said, adding earlier, four students had fallen ill similarly but were cured by witchcraft. PNN

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8 People Who Allegedly Sold Their Souls to the Devil | The Lineup the-line-up.com

The Lineup

What would you sell to get what you want?

By Elisabeth Tilstra

Be careful what you wish for. These men and women allegedly signed contracts with Satan to get what they wanted. The deals may have paid off in the short-term, but the eternal return was far from positive.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Many view St. Theophilus of Adana (also known as Saint Theophilus the Penitent) as the first man who sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for social or political advancement. So the story goes, Theophilus was unanimously elected to become a bishop in the sixth century. He declined the offer out of humility. Another man accepted the position, and promptly made Theophilus' life miserable. Regretting his decision, Theophilus summoned a sorcerer who helped contact the Devil. The Devil was more than happy to rectify the situation—provided the cleric renounce Christ and the Virgin Mary in a contract spelled out in his own blood. Theophilus accepted the demands, signed off on the pact, and ascended to the title originally offered him.

As the years went by, however, doubt crept in. Theophilus begged forgiveness from the Virgin Mary. He fasted for forty days, after which time the Virgin reportedly appeared and rebuked him; Theophilus pleaded for mercy, and she left with the promise that she would talk to God on his behalf. After Theophilus fasted for another thirty days, the Virgin Mary returned with the message that God had pardoned him. Three days later, however, Theophilus awoke to find the bloody contract placed upon his chest. Satan refused to relinquish his hold on the cleric's soul. A terrified Theophilus sought counsel from another bishop, who burned the contract and freed him from the infernal pact. Overwhelmed with joy, Theophilus died on the spot, relieved to be free.

2. Robert Johnson

Robert Johnson was an American blues musician from the early 20th century who, as legend has it, acquired his musical prowess from a midnight deal with the Devil. Born in 1911, Johnson grew up along the Mississippi Delta. As a young man, he yearned for musical greatness and one night took his guitar to the crossroads in hopes of conjuring dark forces. The Devil appeared and took Johnson's guitar; he played a few songs, and then handed it back, granting the young musician complete mastery of the instrument.

The story thus explained Johnson's extraordinary skill; it also led to rumors that Johnson's drooping eye spoke of an infernal connection, and that he turned away from his audience while performing to hide the presence of evil. Johnson did little to discourage such tales—if anything, he fanned the



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

flames with lyrics such as “Early this morning when you knocked upon my door / And I said, ‘Hello, Satan, I believe it’s time to go.’” In 1938, Johnson died under mysterious circumstances at the age of 27. Some say he succumbed to syphilis, others poisoning, whereas others contend it was the Devil himself collecting his due.

3. Nicolò Paganini



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Nearly 150 years before Johnson’s midnight pact, another famous musician was accused of bargaining with the Devil in exchange for musical greatness. Nicolò Paganini, born in 1782, was an Italian violist, violinist, guitarist, and composer known for his complex pieces and uncanny musicianship. The virtuoso began performing publicly at the age of 12, only to collapse under the pressure just four years later. He returned to the music scene at age 22, performing complex arrangements of his own devising. Several of the compositions were so demanding that Paginini was the only person alive who could properly play them.

As word of his talent spread, so too did the rumor that his abilities were the result of an unholy pact. Some even said they saw Satan on stage with Paganini, assisting the violinist during concerts. Such claims were so widespread, in fact, that Paganini was denied final rites and a proper burial upon his death. It took 36 years after his passing before his body was finally laid to rest in a cemetery in Parma, Italy, a great distance from his home in Genoa.

4. Giuseppe Tartini

Guiseppi Tartini is another Italian violinist said to have struck a deal with the Devil. So the legend goes, a dark figure visited Tartini in a dream one night in 1713. It was the Devil offering his services in exchange for the musician’s soul. Tartini agreed to the pact, after which the Devil scooped up his violin and played the most beautiful song. Upon waking, Tartini grabbed his instrument and desperately tried to recreate the song. The result was the “Devil’s Trill Sonata,” which remains one of the most difficult pieces of violin music ever written. Observers who witnessed Tartini play the piece were convinced he must have had otherworldly assistance to be able to perform it so perfectly. Tartini, however, was never satisfied with the piece. He maintained that it could not hold a candle to the original tune played by the sinister figure from his dream.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

5. Urbain Grandier



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Of the souls on this list, Grandier is unique in that his alleged contract with the Devil actually exists. Born in 1590, Grandier was a French Catholic priest known for being sexually promiscuous with more than a few nuns. He was also an outspoken critic of the church's stance on celibacy. At some point, several of Grandier's former bedmates accused the priest of witchcraft, claiming he employed dark magic to lead them into temptation. A trial commenced, though it resulted in an acquittal.

France's chief minister, Cardinal Richelieu, was no fan of Grandier; the priest had published several withering criticisms about him. So Richelieu ordered a second trial. Grandier was arrested and put through torture during his interrogation. The damning evidence, however, came in the form of a document allegedly found among Grandier's belongings. It was a contract, written in Latin and covered in strange symbols, which boasted Grandier's signature and the signatures of several demons—including Satan himself. The bond promised Grandier "the love of women, the flower of virgins, the respect of monarchs, honors, lusts and powers" in exchange for the priest's allegiance. It's unclear if Grandier was forced to sign the document under duress, or if it was completely forged by those angling for his demise. In either case, Grandier was found guilty of fraternizing with Satan and sentenced to death. He was burned at the stake in 1634.

6. Brigadier General Jonathan Moulton

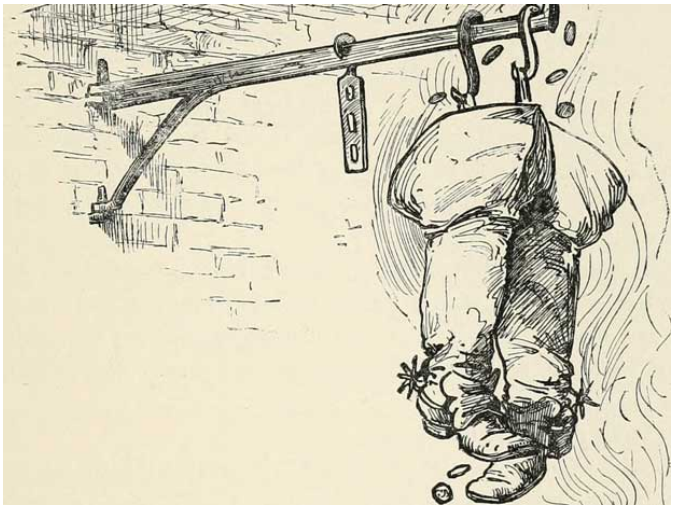


Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Jonathan Moulton, born in 1726, was a famed soldier of colonial America—serving in King George's War as well as the French and Indian War. He became one of New England's wealthiest men after his service, which gave way to rumors that the man was in cahoots with the Devil. Rumors swirled that General Moulton had struck a financial deal with Satan; in exchange for eternal devotion and retention of his soul, the Devil would visit Moulton's home every month and fill his boot with gold. Despite such a handsome sum, General Moulton grew greedy; he cut a hole in the floor above his basement, over which he placed his boot with a freshly punched hole in the boot's heel. Moulton

may have thought himself quite clever—but one should never try to outfox the Devil. Upon realizing the scheme, the Devil burned down Moulton's house, along with the gold coins.

7. Antoine Rose



'A Fine Teacher!' by Francisco Goya. Photo: Bettmann / Getty

Antoine Rose, the first female of this list, was a woman from the 15th century who confessed—under torture—to regularly meet with the Devil. Today, she's credited with our modern-day image of a witch riding a broomstick. Rose, who came to be known as the Witch of Savoy, France, claimed that she had been destitute, and in dire need of money. Seeking help from her neighbor, Rose was led to a group of people who convinced her to ask the Devil for help.

The Devil appeared and agreed to assist the struggling woman—so long as she rejected God and worshipped him instead. The Devil also gave her a stick, a foot and a half in length, and a small pot of ointment. She was to smear a bit of the ointment on the stick, place the stick between her legs, and say, "Go, in the name of the Devil, go!" In her confession, Rose described some of the tributes the worshippers paid to the Devil, including dancing and feasting, and kissing the Devil's hindquarters when he appeared in the physical form of a large black dog. Rose also stated that the Devil had a low, raspy voice in human form, and she was terrified of him the first time they met.

8. Christoph Haizmann



A Painting by Christoph Haizmann. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Born in 1651/52, Johann Christoph Haizmann was a painter who allegedly sold his soul to the Devil after the death of his parent. In exchange for relief from poverty and depression, Haizmann agreed to be the earthly "son" of the Devil for nine years. Afterward, Haizmann's body and soul would pass into the Devil's hands.

Haizmann claimed that he signed two documents confirming the pact—one penned in ink and the other in his own blood. As the due date approached, the painter grew worried. In 1677, he sought help from a Catholic priest, who performed an exorcism on the young man. The ritual soothed Haizmann's troubled mind; he had a vision in which he successfully retrieved the pact penned in blood. Soon thereafter, Haizmann sought to annul the ink-written contract. He secured a second exorcism in 1678, which succeeded in calming his nerves.

Haizmann continued to paint after the exorcisms, creating several pieces that depicted his encounters with the Devil. Such works illustrated Haizmann's journal entries that described his infernal visions. Toward the end of his life, Haizmann joined the Brothers Hospitallers of Saint John

of God. He died in 1700. It's said that Haizmann was frequently visited by the Devil and other demonic beings, who tried to tempt him away from his newfound life of piety.

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The Evolution of the Vampire in Fiction and Popular Culture

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This paper was written for Dr. Brevik's Senior Thesis and Presentation course.

The legend of the vampire is one that continues to frighten and fascinate people world-wide. The idea of an undead night-stalker that feeds on human blood has been around for centuries and endures to this day. Numerous countries and cultures across the globe have personal deviations of a similar folkloric entity. No matter the variation, all vampire tales have a key commonality—the lust for human blood. It was not until the late 19th century that an Irish author complied a breadth of knowledge on such folkloric tales and concocted the character that now acts as the template for the vampire myth. Bram Stoker's Dracula was first published in 1897 and from that point forward the novelist's title character set the precedent for all fictional vampires. Vampire fiction, however, continues to evolve and captivate despite the fact that it draws from a vast folkloric and literary past.

Today, many cultures have their own ideas about mystical blood-sucking creatures and the vampire myth continues to thrive globally. For example, on the island of Trinidad, there are rumors of soucouyants, an old woman who sheds her skin at night. She assumes the form of a ball of fire and enters her victim's residence through a crack or key-hole to nourish herself on the blood of the hapless donor. To stop the soucouyants's advances into a household, the victim must visit the witch's home and sprinkle hot pepper on her abandoned skin. Upon reassembly the vampire-witch will burn to death. In comparison, the Tlaxcala monster, the tlahuelpuchis, is a female witch who sucks the blood of infants Also, in Maya, a present day region of the highlands of Chiapas in southern Mexico, there is the legend of the Blackman, a winged black demon who specializes in unrestrained sexuality, people-snatching, and cannibalism. He is said to have a six-foot penis that causes his victims to go insane. Once a woman has been attacked by a Blackman she can never return to her old life in the village. The victim will forever carry a foul odor and her children will resemble the Blackman. To destroy a Blackman, he must be impaled, burned, or cooked. In addition to the Blackman, the modern Peruvian Shipibo myth tells of the marriage of a woman to a night stalker. In the daylight she will discover his misshapen snout and wings. The monster-husband will then murder his wife by sucking her blood. Similarly, the Ecuadorian "Tin-Tin" whistles adolescent girls to destruction in the moonlight. He seduces them and impregnates them. The Amazonian Uahti are hair-covered creatures of the forest and water and are accompanied by a flurry of bats. They have a large penis and enjoy attacking men as well as adolescent girls (Brown 93-95). Hence, these contemporary folkloric tales prove differing cultures continue to have their own ideas about blood-suckers but also share consistencies between the various legends.

The idea that vampires exist across the globe has been a subject of folk tale, superstition, and myth throughout the history of man[1] (Noll 37). According to Brown:

> Supernatural beings that visit humans and animals during the night to feed on their blood or other life-giving forces are a widespread and persistent belief. Legends of such creatures have been reported for various cultures almost worldwide, including China, India, Malaya, the Phillipines, Arabia, Turkey, Africa, and Europe. The ancient Greeks and Romans told of lamiae and succubi, demons in female form who sucked men's blood while having sexual relations with them in their sleep until they were deprived of their manhood or died. Their male counterpart was the incubus who preyed on women in a like fashion. Similar creatures are found in Oriental legends with the added attraction that they fed on corpses as well as blood. Nor were such beliefs confined to the Eastern Hemisphere. Prior to the Conquest, the Aztec Indians of Mexico had a dread of dead women called Ciuateteos. Ciuateteos could be the most lascivious of succubi or hideous hags, both of which sought out young men in order to copulate with them, some even bearing children as a result. (96)

Noll believes,

> …the universality of the legend of the vampire has importance. Though these legendary figures performed acts besides those included within the bounds of our definition, (such as returning from the dead) nonetheless the biting of the object and sucking of its blood was a most essential element. These legends can be found as early as Greek and Roman mythology and were seen throughout Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa. (28)

Noll agrees that vampire aspects are found in ancient mythology: "Some of the most venerable members of the pantheon of human gods were given to blood sucking in one form or another" (37). Furthermore, in ancient Greece and Rome the vampires were thought to be blood-sucking evil ghosts. In Greece, the Lamiae were the corpses of loose women who came back to drink the blood out of children. Similarly, Roman Striges were women who assumed the shape of birds to feed upon the life-source of children (Rickles 9-10). Vampires are also found in biblical text. Oranis, a vampiric, shape-shifting, soul-stealing demon, was controlled by King Solomon according to the apocryphal book, Testament of Solomon (Guiley 223).

Despite ties with ancient mythology, the vampiric legend is thought to originate in the east.

> The earliest known depiction of a vampire appears on a prehistoric Assyrian bowl, and shows a man copulating with a vampire whose head has been severed from her body. In India, the vampire theme can be traced to the Atharva Veda, and the Baital-Pachisi, or Tales of a Vampire, from an important part of the body of ancient literary heritage. In ancient Mexico, vampires were called Ciuateteo, and were associated with women who had died in their first labor. The Chinese vampire, Ch'ing Shih, often described in stories of the T'and Dynasty, takes origin from much earlier times, and has a close similarity with the vampire image of the West. It would appear

> that a psychic counterpart necessary for projection of the vampire into myth has existed since earliest times, and that it may be among the most archaic images known,

states Noll (37-38). According to Noll, "The vampire theme may have reached Western Europe through Turkey and the Balkans, having come from India" (38). Brown concurs, "The blood-sucking vampire best known to Westerners has its origins in ancient Assyria and goes back to at least Babylonian times" (96). These Middle-Eastern undead survived on the blood and flesh of the living. At night they visited their prey by taking the form of owls and bats, or "night birds" and they could also transform into wolves, cats, and other animals. In addition, the night-stalkers could take the form of inanimate objects such as straw, beams of light, or wisps of smoke. If a person was bitten by one of these monsters, he was cursed to become one himself. Therefore, reports of vampire attacks morphed into massive epidemics (Brown 96-97). According to Noll,

> As the legendary creature of supernatural origin known as the vampire (from the Hungarian, vampire) has long been associated with blood drinking and other abominable practices, it is not surprising that the widespread folklore telling of a society of vampires that threatens humanity led to many documented mass hysterical vampire scares in various towns and cities in Central Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries. (5)

As a result of these epidemics, supposed vampire bodies were extracted from the ground and their un-decomposed bodies were staked through the heart. The beheading and burning of hearts and bodies was also recommended (Brown 97).

Ultimately, tales of night-stalking bloodsuckers spread throughout Turkey and into the Balkans. The vampire superstitions became custom among Slavic and other Eastern Orthodox Christians of Turkish-occupied Europe (Brown 97). Hence, vampires came to be thought of as predominantly a Slavic myth (Noll 37). The ancient legends became embellished and the fear of vampires became a way of life and death. Undead parasites were blamed for any unexplainable event, especially the sudden death of living creatures. Vampire hysteria was reported in the late 1600s to early 1700s in Wallachia, Moldavia, Serbia, and Transylvania. Similar vampire epidemics were described in Silesia, Romania, and Russia (Brown 97-98). Africans also told tales of the pale European vampires that sucked the blood and ate the flesh of innocent natives during the European colonization of the continent (Noll 6).

Across the world, the rise of vampire hysteria was accompanied by the practice of vampire hunts. The earliest record of vampire hunters can be found in Roman history: ". . . in ancient Rome a college of clairvoyant priests was established for the training of the first ghostbusters in the war against vampirism" (Rickels 10). The original, and possibly the most notorious, of vampyrist, Gilles de Rais, a Marshal of France, was tried and executed in 1440. He was thought to have sliced the throats of more than 400 children. De Rais made his servants slit the victim's throat so the blood would spurt on his noble body. He would then sit on the dying child's bowels and drink the blood from the mutilated corpse. De Rais was sentenced to death by strangulation and afterwards his body was burned (Brown 101). More than a century later, in 1611, infamous female vampyrist, Countess Elisabeth Bathory of Transylvania, was tried for the death of 650 young women. The Countess believed bathing in the blood of young girls maintained a youthful complexion. She hired a progression of girls from a nearby village and she and her handmaidens imprisoned, tortured, and killed the hapless victims. It is reported that the Countess required her servants to lick the blood from her back instead of using a towel. Bathory's accomplices' fingernails were pulled from their beds and they were burned alive for their crimes. Because she was of noble birth and immune to execution, the Countess was sentenced to seclusion and she died three years later (Brown 101). In 1766, Hungarian Empress Maria Theresa forbade witch and vampire-hunts and in 1768 a law was passed to forbidding the persecution of magical activity because panic and death had become a normal circumstance of the region (Noll 5).

Vampire epidemics were not secluded to the east. In the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, there was an alleged outbreak of vampirism in New England. All of the cases shared common characteristics, including multiple family deaths due to consumption. It was superstitiously believed that if a person died of consumption, the corpse might feed on remaining family members. Therefore, the bodies were extracted from the earth and the heart and other vital organs were removed, burned, and mixed with medicine. Hence, in 1892, Mercy Lea Brown, the most famous alleged vampire in America, was exhumed from her grave. Her family was suspect of vampirism because several members died within a short period and her brother was on the brink of death. Brown's father was advised to burn his deceased daughter's organs and feed them to his ill son in order to cease the vampirism of his family. Brown's brother was given the treatment, but died soon after (Guiley 36).

Vampirism continued into the twentieth century. For example, Fritz Haarman lured his victims into his home and with the aid of an accomplice entrapped them there. He killed the young men by biting their jugular veins and drinking their blood. He then ground the remainder of their bodies into sausage to be eaten or sold. In 1924, Haarman, "The Hanover Vampyre," was beheaded for killing nearly 50 boys and young men in post World War I Germany. In addition, John Haigh shot or clubbed his prey in the head, plugged their wounds, and slit their throats to draw a cupful of blood to drink in order to "revive" himself. Known as the "acid-bath" murderer, Haigh, was hung in 1949 after confessing to killing 9 people due to his insatiable desire for blood. A more recent example of a man arrested for his vampire actions is the deaf-mute laborer, Kuno Hoffman. In the early 1970s, Hoffman read obituaries and broke into the fresh graves of at least 35 deceased individuals. He sliced the corpses with razors drinking the blood in order to become good-looking and strong. In 1973, he was apprehended for killing a couple on a lover's lane. He shot the pair and drank the fresh blood from their wounds. Hoffman declared the live blood to be more invigorating than that from the corpses (Brown 101-102). Today, in a phenomenon particular to the United States and Canada, there is the

> . . . belief that there is a vast underground conspiracy of satanic cults practicing the Black Mass with ritualized cannibalism, the killing and eating of infants, sexual orgies involving all ages and species, and blood rituals. Reports began to appear with alarming frequency in the American media after about 1980. (Noll 6)

These accusations led to serious on-going investigations by the FBI, but no corroborating evidence has been found to back up the claims of underground Satanism involving ritualized murder, blood drinking, and child abuse (Noll 6-7). And so, vampire hunts continue to some extent.

The most notable epidemic and subsequent hunt, however, is recorded as the Arnold Paole case. In December 1731, the Austrian government sent a contingent of medical examiners under Field Surgeon Johannes Fluckinger to investigate reports of bodies being extracted, staked, dismembered and burned in Medwegya. The medical officers were informed several of these deaths were thought to be due to a self-confessed vampire, Arnold Paole, who had died of a broken neck five years before the outbreak. Many of the townspeople complained of being haunted by Paole a month after his death. Therefore, his grave was examined by the town leaders and his body was found perfectly preserved; blood flowed freely from Paole's eyes, ears, and nose and new fingernails and toenails had grown to replace the one's he had in life (Brown 97). "When a stake was driven through his heart, he was said to have given a loud shriek, and great quantities of blood had gushed forth," Brown informs (97). After the corpse was staked, the remains were burned and the ashes were returned to his tomb. Before his disposal, Paole was reported to have attacked several people and at least a herd of cattle (Brown 97). Brown states,

> Although the corpses of his human victims had undergone the anti-vampyre treatment, all the villagers who had eaten beef from cattle that had been fed upon by the vampyres were now presumed to be vampyres themselves. (98)

Seventeen people mysteriously died within a three month period and many of these deaths were assumed to be the delayed work of Paole. Fluckinger and his officers exhumed and examined fifteen bodies, including two children. Eleven of the corpses were determined to be in a vampire state and showed signs of preservation by blood-sucking, including, neck scars and plump blood filled bodies (Brown 98).

Fluckinger's findings were a sensation upon his return to Vienna. Copies were translated and printed throughout Europe and commanded the interest of all who read the account. Everyone had an explanation for the events in Medwegya; clergymen, scholars, and men of science asserted their opinions (Brown 98). German and French universities reported the outbreak of the eastern vampirism in newspapers and journals (Rickles 2). Rickles states,

> If you were to hit the books on vampirology and vampirism, you would be struck by how, at any given time, always different sets of people were suddenly coming under suspicion of being candidates for becoming vampires. (2)

Due to the rise of medical reports on the condition, "vampyre" officially became a word in the English Oxford dictionary in 1734 (Brown 98). Through Fluckinger's published first-hand account, vampires legitimately found their place in popular culture. Noll states,

> Throughout the latter half of the 18th and the entire 19th centuries, vampires were the subject of many poems, stage plays, novels, and "penny dreadfuls" throughout Europe, but particularly in England. This interest was directly due to the peaking of the "vampire epidemic" in Central Europe in the 1730s. (9)

Fluckinger's report of the Arnold Paole case brought the birth of vampires in literature and it was only a matter of time before the undead became a popular fictional theme (Brown 98).

In the summer of 1816, Lord Byron, John Polidori, Percival Bysshe Shelley, Mary Goodwin Shelley, and Claire Clairmont, all friends, enjoyed reading gothic horror stories including the recently available texts on Eastern European vampires. The group, intoxicated on laudanum and tainted meat, decided that each should write his or her own gothic tale. The result was Mary Shelley's Frankenstien and Polidori's The Vampyre, originally published under Byron's name in 1819. In Polidori's work, the noble Lord Ruthven is a vampire who drains the blood of his victims. The success of the novel spawned a series of gentlemen vampire imitators. Eventually, many writers of the 19th century wrote a work of vampire fiction, including: Goethe, Alexandre Dumas, Alexis Tolstoy, Guy de Maupassant, H.G. Wells, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Jules Verne. Sheridan Le Fanu's Carmilla differed from most other horror tales of the time because the main vampiric character was a woman (Brown 105). Overall, these Victorian vampire narratives dealt with the vampire difference, often referring to sexuality and sophistication of the demonic creatures (Gelder 141). Brown states,

> A favorite twist was to portray the vampire as a creature of noble birth, an allusion popular with the general public as it provided a convenient means of illustrating the blood-sucking propensities of royalty with a minimum of risk. Naturally, the locale for most of these works was somewhere in the Balkans—a setting that would return again and again throughout the history of the genre. (103)

Thus, because of actual accounts of vampire activity, the evil blood-suckers became a favored nightmare of popular society.

No vampire fiction, however, has reached the insurmountable peaks of popularity that Bram Stoker created with his title character in the 1897 novel, Dracula. With the release of his inventive narrative, Stoker made vampire a household word (Noll 38). Brown states, "With the publication of Bram Stoker's Dracula in 1897, the vampyre mystique reached new height from which it has never descended" (107). Although the novel was an immediate success, it was initially seen as no more than a slightly cheesy thriller (Allen xiii). Waller disagrees with the early critics, he believes Dracula is the most influential of all the tales of the living and the undead and is one of the world's most significant horror stories. Noll calls Stoker's novel the most terrifying and titillating vampire novel of all time. Although his fiction considered cheap entertainment, Stoker was

also well received by his contemporaries. Many literary minds of the time commented on Stoker's ability to frighten (Snef 12).

Writing Dracula was a tedious process for Stoker. The novelist spent six years working on his masterpiece. The first documentation of his idea was written on March 8, 1890 and the last recorded date is March 17, 1896 (Snef 11). Stoker took extensive notes while on tour as Henry Irving's agent (Noll 9). He worked in the archives at the British Museum to give a coherent historical account of vampirism in his work of fiction (Rickels 1). Noll affirms,

> Stoker used the British Museum in London and various libraries as he travelled to conduct meticulous research into the legend of the vampire, the geography and customs of Transylvania (then in Hungary), and the many other details (nautical weather schedules, etc.) that would flesh out the skeleton of the novel. (9)

In addition to research, Stoker used his own imagination in creating the iconic vampire. Dracula differs from the vampires of European folklore by having animalistic features and supernatural powers through his blood lust (Guiley 8).

When studying Eastern European folklore, Stoker must have been intrigued by accounts of the tactics of the real Wallachian Dracula, because he chose the prince as a model for his title character. According to Guiley,

> At some point in his work on the novel, Stoker named his vampire "Count Wampyr." But in 1892 his notes show the name Count Dracula . . . Stoker liked the name and its meaning, and so he lifted it for his vampire. He did not base the count on Vlad, except to describe Dracula as being descended from a line of fierce warrior nobleman. (80-81)

In midst of his painstaking research, the novelist charted the historical Dracula's lineage all the way back to the fifteenth-century (Rickels 11). The historical Vlad III Dracula inherited his name from his father, who had been made a member of the Order of the Dragon by Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg. The Order of the Dragon was created to halt the Turkish onslaught in Europe. In the fifteenth century, the name dracul had the meaning of "dragon." In modern Romanian the word means "devil." At the time the title was given to the prince, Dracula meant "son of the Dragon." The name, however, has come to mean "son of the Devil." Vlad III Dracula, also known as Vlad Ţepeş (the Impaler), is one of the most controversial figures of fifteenth century Europe. Stoker's title character has often been confused with the Romanian prince and legends about the life of Vlad Ţepeş have taken a pejorative turn throughout the years. Tales of the historical prince have skewed him as a bloody tyrant who enjoyed having breakfast among the bodies of his impaled victims, when, in fact, he was a stern but just leader (Treptow 9-17).

Although he was captivated by Vlad III Dracula's actual life, Stoker was motivated by more than the history of a dead prince; he was also inspired by his own experiences. Born in Dublin, Ireland on November 8, 1847, Abraham Stoker was the third of seven children to Abraham Stoker and Charlotte Mitilda Blake Thornley. He was a sickly child and lived as an invalid for the first seven years of his life. During his bed-ridden existence, Stoker's mother told him many stories which he later used in his fiction. As an invalid, the adolescent was left under the care of his uncle, William Stoker, a doctor, who wrote articles on contagious diseases and practiced bleeding on many of his patients. Also, Stoker's brother, George, became a specialist in throat diseases; this medical orientation in his adolescence provided rich material for the novel Dracula. Eventually, the sickly child grew to be more than six feet tall and became athletic and muscular. In 1868, he graduated with honors in science at Trinity College and later gained a master's degree in pure mathematics (Snef xi; Umland 5). Throughout his life, Stoker had an undying interest in the occult and macabre. His Irish heritage and the fairytales of his childhood provided a base of interest in supernatural folklore. He associated with people who pursued spiritual and psychic endeavors. Spiritualism was prominent during his lifetime and séances were extremely popular. Stoker attended at least one lecture given at the Society for Psychical Research (Guiley 267). In 1871, Stoker read Sheridan Le Fanu's Carmilla, and was very moved by the work. He drafted a chapter about a vampire Countess, a story that would eventually become "Dracula's Guest." That same year, Stoker became an unpaid drama critic. He befriended artistic types including Henry Irving and Oscar Wilde. In 1878, Stoker became the manager of the Lyceum Theatre as a favor to Irving and began travelling with the actor. The writer was also fascinated with the breakthroughs in technology and in 1892 he heard a recorded cylinder of Tennyson reading poetry; intrigued, he started sketching the plot of Dracula and placed the events of the story during the course of the following year. Six years later, Dracula was published and on May 26, 1897, a dramatic version of the novel was acted at the Lyceum to establish a copyright and to protect the story from piracy (Snef xii-xiv).

Unlike other vampire novelist of the Victorian age, Stoker not only transformed vampire folklore into a literary icon, he also emphasized the nature of the vampire and placed the monster into a modern setting. He was the first writer to use the vampire as an intersection between myth and science, past and present. Ultimately, Stoker revolutionized ideas about vampires (Snef 7). Since the first publication in 1897, Stoker's novel has never been out of print (Brown 107). Snef states,

> Although the critics' response has been mixed since the novel was first published, Dracula has always been immensely popular with ordinary readers. In fact, it has never been out of print in English, and it has been translated into numerous foreign languages. In addition, the novel has been a favorite for both dramatic and film interpretations, including F.W. Murnau's Nosferatu, the Vampire (1922); Tod Browning's Dracula (1931); and literally hundreds of others that are loosely based on the novel. (13)

Furthermore, the tale of the legendary vampire continues to attract attention from literary critics, students of popular culture, and film critics (Snef 15). Allen agrees, "The novel has provided rich material for every fad and fancy of twentieth century exegesis" (xiii). Dracula has, therefore, shed his status of "fictional character" and became a modern myth (Allen xiii). Snef concurs, "The sheer number of works with "Dracula" in their title tempts me to argue that no other single work, with the

exception of the Bible, has so influenced Anglo-American culture" (7). Snef also offers one explanation for the immense success of the novel, "Dracula continues to fascinate us because it both reveals the contradictions of Stoker's own day and points us to the internal tensions of our own" (10). Dedicated to his work, Stoker went to great lengths to accomplish the novel Dracula.

Stoker's success is greatly due to the originality of his title character—a character that persists in contemporary fiction. Guiley claims,

> No matter how great the popularity of other vampires, Count Dracula remains the definitive human bloodsucker. No other character has eclipsed him . . . There is always yet another tale that can be told of the most famous monster of all. (84)

In fact, many novelists borrow Stoker's original model for fresh stories involving Count Dracula. Elizabeth Kostova's The Historian, for instance, describes a modern hunt for the legendary vampire. Kostova's novel opens with the menacing threat of Dracula's ability to surpass time:

> As a historian, I have learned that, in fact, not everyone who reaches back into history can survive it. And it is not only reaching back that endangers us; sometimes history itself reaches inexorably forward for us with its shadowy claw. (ix)

In her tale, Kostova adopts many of Stoker's characteristics for the renowned monster including his hypnotic ability and physical description:

> He was so real, so close to us that I could not breathe; in fact, I began to feel that if I could only force myself to go nearer to him I would be able to breathe again, and then I began to long to go a little closer. I could feel the silver knife in my pocket, but nothing could have persuaded me to reach for it. Something glinted where his face must have been—reddish eyes? Teeth, a smile?—and then, with a gush of language, he spoke. I call it a gush because I have never heard such a sound, a guttural rush of words that might have been many languages together or one strange language I had never heard. After a moment it resolved itself into words I could understand, and I had the sense that they were words I knew with my blood, not my ears. (Kostova 622)

This description of the Count is closely related to Mina Harker's first glimpse of the vampire and the fear her husband expresses by merely being in the presence of the Count:

> He was very pale and his eyes seemed bulging out as, half in terror and half in amazement, he gazed at a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard. . . His face was not a good face; it was hard, and cruel; and sensual, and his big white teeth, that looked all the whiter because his lips were so red, were pointed like an animal's. Jonathan kept staring at him, till I was afraid he would notice. I feared he might take ill, he looked so fierce and nasty. I asked Jonathan why he was disturbed, and he answered, evidently thinking that I knew as much about it as he did: 'Do you see who it is?' (Stoker 186)

Both descriptions of Dracula incorporate his ability to intimidate by merely being in the vicinity of a person. Throughout the novel Kostova adopts Stoker's original figure but adds her own twists to the vampire's character. In The Historian, Kostova's narrator insinuates that Stoker had a run in with the actual vampire Dracula and was inspired to write his fictional novel.

Another example of Dracula in contemporary fiction can be found in Nancy Holder's short story "Blood Gothic." In the tale, a young woman longs for her vampire lover:

> Then, all at once, it happened. The windows rattled, flapped inward. A great shadow, a curtain of ebony, fell across the bed, and the room began to whirl, faster, faster still; and she was consumed with a bitter, deathly chill. She heard, rather than saw, the wineglass crash to the floor, and struggled to keep her eyes open as she was overwhelmed, engulfed, taken . . . Freezing hands touched her everywhere: her face, her breasts, the desperate offering of her arched neck. Frozen and strong and never-dying. Sinking, she smiled in a rictus of mortal dread and exultation. Eternal damnation, eternal love. Her vampire lover had come for her at last. (Holder 201)

The disastrous relationship heavily resembles the seduction of Lucy Westenra by the Count:

> I remember, though I suppose I was asleep, passing through the streets and over the bridge. A fish leaped as I went by, and I leaned over to look at it, and I heard a lot of dogs howling—the whole town seemed as if it must be full of dogs all howling at once—as I went up the steps. Then I have a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, just as we saw in the sunset, and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once; and then I seemed sinking into deep green water, and there was singing in my ears, as I have heard there is to drowning men; and then everything seemed passing away from me; my soul seemed to go out from my body and float about the air. (Stoker 110).

Similarly, in Eric Van Lustbader's short story, "In Darkness, Angels," the Dracula-esque character, Mordor is physically described as Stoker's vampire:

> His face was long and narrow, as bony as a corpse's, his skin fully as pale. His eyes, beneath darkly furred brows, were bits of bituminous matter as if put there to plug a pair of holes into his interior. His nose was long and thin to the point of severity but his lips were full and rubicund, providing the only color to his otherwise deathly pallid face. (Van Lustbader 343)

In comparison, Stoker's original description of Dracula:

> His face was strong—a very strong—aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows

were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in the man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. (22-23)

Hence, Mordor is physically the same as the character Stoker created in the late 1800s.

In addition to adult fiction, Dracula can also be found in children's literature. Drak's Slumber Party by Gertrude Gruesome, for instance, is a story about a vampire boy who wants to have a birthday party despite the fact that vampires do not have birthdays. Gruesome's title character not only shares a name with Stoker's title character, but he also lives in a castle and leaves Transylvania for a fresh atmosphere. Drak's mother, Mrs. Fangula, states:

Transylvania has become so violent. Too many monsters for such a small spot. Things are so peaceful here. We were lucky enough to find this castle in a good neighborhood. (7-8)

Thus, a contemporary character may not share the name Dracula, but literary minds often borrow traits and characteristics from Stoker's title character as a way to perpetuate his immortal legend.

The character of the notorious vampire has not only been altered within literature; with the help of technology and the invention of cinema, the physical face of Dracula has also evolved throughout the years. Count Dracula has appeared in over 130 films since the publication of Stoker's novel; that is more films than any other fictional character with the exception of Sherlock Holmes (Guiley 108). According to Gelder, "Most people, certainly would 'know' about Dracula from films rather than from Stoker's novel, popular as it has been" (86). Stoker's title character has had many faces on film. The first vampire film, as a matter of fact, is based on Stoker's novel. Murnau's Nosferatu, a silent German film, is the first example of Dracula on screen. In the silent movie, the Dracula figure, Count Graf Orlok, played by Max Schreck, featured a bald head, pointed ears, a large hooked nose, and two rat-like front teeth. Although Stoker's wife attempted to have the film banned due to copyright issues, it found audiences and Schrek's portrayal set the precedence for the image of the vampire (Gelder 94-95).

It was not until the release of Tod Browning's Dracula in 1931 that Stoker's vampire found a new face. This film, starring Hungarian actor Bela Lugosi, remains the quintessential vampire movie (Brown 111). In the picture, Dracula wears a black suit with a crisp white shirt and a high-collared black cape. He has long fingernails, piercing eyes, slick black hair, and elongated canines (Dracula). Lugosi is often considered the "original" Dracula because his performance is where vampire recognition begins. The popular actor played the Count three times, including: Universal's Dracula (1931), MGM's Mark of the Vampire (1935), and Abbott and Castello Meet Frankenstein (1948). When Lugosi died, his corpse was made up to look like the Count and was put on public display (Gelder 91). Thirty years after Lugosi's first portrayal as Dracula, Christopher Lee adopted the gentleman Dracula's charm, elegance, sleek hair, and arched eyebrows. He, however, dropped the Hungarian accent. Lee also underscored Dracula's attractiveness and ferocity. His vampiric trademark was his blood red eyes (Gelder 91-92).

Thanks to Lugosi and Lee, Dracula is now a stereotype unto itself. Gelder believes the stereotypical vampire is an individual entity of popular culture, "Rather than being dependant upon an original novel—Bram Stoker's Dracula, in this case—this 'look' becomes original to itself" (92). An audience, however, is aware that the figure of Dracula changes with the imagination of creators who experiment with Stoker's innovative character.

In recent decades, the appearance of the "king vampire" on screen has swayed from the stereotype set by Lugosi and Lee. The 20th century showed physical attractiveness and desirable sexuality as a trademark of the Count. For example, Gary Oldman's interpretation of Dracula in Coppala's 1992 version, Bram Stoker's Dracula, changed the look of the Count from Lugosi's stylized version. In the picture, Harker meets Dracula as an elderly man. Oldman's Dracula has long white hair, papery wrinkled skin, long fingernails and canines, and a thick Romanian accent. The character is frail until his arrival in England. He then retracts in age. His hair is shoulder length and brown, the elasticity of his skin returns, he becomes attractive and charming. According to Gelder, "Dracula in Coppola's film, is a romantic and 'naturally' cinematic hero who sweeps Mina off her feet: after just a little while, she simple cannot say no to him" (90).

Another example of the sexually appealing Count includes Dracula 2000. In the film, handsome actor, Gerard Butler, portrays Dracula. At the onset of the movie, the character is a corpse because he has been drained of his life-force—blood. After an intentional accident on a plane, Dracula ingests the blood of another and grows younger. The more blood he receives the more appealing his physical appearance becomes. Although he has red rimmed irises and long fingernails, his teeth only lengthen when he attacks. His physical appearance is alluring and off-balances his menacing qualities. Furthermore, Butler's Dracula, like Stoker's original character, surrounds himself with seductive vampire women. Each of these lustful ladies competes to command his attention and there is an underlying sense of familial orgy. In the end, Dracula may have been scary in the late 20th century, but he was also sexy.

Even though he is a prominent figure, Count Dracula is not the only globally known vampire in today's popular culture. Gelder states, ". . . the figure of Count Dracula is, now, just one vampire amongst many others in the cinematic world" (86). There are contradictions to how many films have been made featuring a vampire. Guiley thinks that more than 600 vampire films have been produced. Brown believes that the number is significantly higher, "The number of vampyre movies exploded after 1960 until there are now close to 1,000 titles" (113). And Gelder insists that the number is closer to 3,000. Gelder also insists that cinema is the ideal medium for the vampire because film, like vampire folklore, is nomadic:

Indeed, it would seem that cinema is—and has been for some time—the rightful place of occupation for the

> vampire . . . Cinema may be a suitably nomadic home for the vampire: it, too, eventually goes everywhere—it has become an internationalized medium . . . film is an animating medium, bringing images to life in an otherwise darkened room, in a simulation of the night—a feature which horror films in particular often speak directly . . . This is certainly a place which the vampire might inevitably inhabit—as a seductive fascinating creature of the night, tied to the reproductive technologies of the modern age and to the accumulation of capital—a creature who, like cinema itself, throws the usual polarity of the real and illusory, belief and disbelief, into question . . . the vampire is, in some respects, a 'naturally' cinematic creature. (87-88)

Whatever the number, it is apparent that the differences between vampires on film is striking. The alternatives between old and new vampire cinema are also vast. New movies, however, draw ideas from the past,

> Later vampire films may need to assert their difference from earlier ones; nevertheless, they are often also highly conscious of their predecessors, drawing on or modifying aspects of them, parodying them, 'recreating' them, and so on. Each new vampire film engages in a process of familiarisation and defamiliarisation, both interpellating viewers who already 'know' about vampires from the movies (and elsewhere), and providing enough points of difference (in the narrative, in the 'look' of the vampire, and so on) for newness to maintain itself. (Gelder 86)

In comparison, Brown believes that, "Vampyre movies have also become progressively more violent and graphic, and not a few are pornographic" (113). Furthermore, vampire films, old and new, are thought to be more formulaic than most because there are certain elements that they could not survive without, including blood, eternal life, and a spectacular climax (Gelder 93).

Dracula may not always be the primary character in vampire cinema, but the genre usually draws from Stoker's original idea. Most vampire films have reoccurring character types. For example, many vampire movies have a Dracula figure or a "head vampire." In the 1987 film The Lost Boys, Max, the video store owner, acts as the Dracula figure by being the head vampire of a coven of teenage deviants. Also, David Slade's 30 Days of Night involves a vampiric pack leader, Marlow, played by Danny Huston. Marlow makes decisions for his coven and seems to have a supernatural power over his minions. Besides the "head vampire" figure, vampire films usually involve a character named Lucy. For the most part, these characters are relatively weak and are ready to sacrifice themselves to evil for one reason or another; three examples of the Lucy persona include the mother in The Lost Boys, a female survivor in 30 Days of Night, and Mary's roommate in Dracula 2000. Many vampire movies have a mother figure, resembling Mina Harker, too. In The Lost Boys, Lucy, Sam and Michael's mother, is sought out by Max to act as Wendy in his Peter Pan fantasy. In 30 Days of Night, Stella Olsen, played by Melissa George, does not want children, but ultimately uses her motherly instincts to protect the remaining townspeople as well as a child in need. Also, Renfield characters are found in vampire cinema. 30 Days of Night has an insane stranger who enters the town before the coven of vampires to act as a prophet. The 2010 film Daybreakers has a character, Lionel "Elvis" Cormac, played by Willem Dafoe, who was once a vampire but sees the brilliance of humanity in hindsight, much like Stoker's Renfield. Furthermore, filmatic vampires are often animalistic, much like Stoker's vampires. For example, the attacking coven in 30 Days of Night resembles a flock of bird-like predators. In Daybreakers, the starving vampiric race morph into ferocious and mindless bat-like beasts as their food supply continues to diminishes. All in all, many characters found in vampire cinema can be traced back to quintessential vampire fiction, Stoker's 1897 novel.

Varying types of vampires continue to be a popular literary focus as well. Like cinema, vampire literary fiction also draws from its predecessors. Adams states,

> With the wealth of material accumulated on the nasty bloodsuckers, no two authors approach the vampire myth in quite the same way. The commonality of the vampire's story means their tales can take place in any place. The backdrop changes, and the details too, but always, underneath it all, there is blood. (1-2)

For instance, Neil Gaiman's short story, "Snow, Glass, Apples," offers a new twist on an old fairytale. In Gaiman's version of the classic tale "Snow White," the evil queen acts as a witch who tries to protect herself and her kingdom from the demonic princess. For his story, Gaiman draws from folkloric vampire tales as well as the popular fairytale:

> I had always been scared of the little princess, but at that moment I warmed to her and, with my fingers, gently, I stroked her cheek. She looked at me and smiled—she smiled but rarely—then she sank her teeth into the base of my thumb, the Mound of Venus, and she drew blood. I began to shriek, from pain and from surprise; but she looked at me and I fell silent. The little princess fastened her mouth to my hand and licked and sucked and drank. When she was finished, she left my chamber. Beneath my gaze the cut that she had made began to close, to scab, and to heal. The next day it was an old scar: I might have cut my hand with a pocket-knife in my childhood. (Gaiman 4)

Another example includes Michael A. Burstein's short story "Lifeblood." In the narrative, the idea of being cursed after being bitten resembles Eastern European folklore:

> Lincoln looked down at his shoes for a moment and wrung his hands. "I'll have to trust you. My son's been bitten, and I need you to life the curse."
>
> "Bitten? By a dog? Better to see a doctor."
>
> "No, not a dog. Cantor, my son Joseph has been bitten three times by a vampire. And unless I can find a cure by sundown tonight, he's going to turn into one himself." (Burstein 78)

In comparison, Stephenie Meyer's novel, Twilight is often argued to be an original concept. Meyer, however, also borrows

from popular vampire lore. For example, each member of the vampiric Cullen family individually possesses a supernatural ability: Edward can read minds; Alice sees the future; Jasper controls emotions; Carlisle has inhuman compassion; Esme has enhanced motherly instincts; Rosalie has unbelievable beauty; Emmett has impossible strength. Meyer, therefore, divides supernatural abilities between family members instead of instilling the qualities into a central character.

In addition to plot and internal traits, the physical description character types are recurrent in vampire fiction as well. For instance, Stephen King's vampires in the 1977 short story "One for the Road" have red eyes like Stoker's vampires:

> "What was it? A deer?" I asked.
>
> "I guess so," he says, sounding shaky. "But its eyes—they looked red." He looked at me. "Is that how a deer's eyes look at night?" (King 470)

Stephenie Meyer's "bad vamps" in the later 2005 novel Twilight also have dark red eyes: "Their eyes were different, too. Not the gold or black I had come to expect, but a deep burgundy color that was disturbing and sinister" (Meyer 376). Similarly, black eyes appear in both Rice's short story "The Master of Rampling Gate" and Meyer's novel. Also, the gentlemen vampires in each narrative are impressing and attractive. Rice describes the narrator's first glance of the vampire:

> I could remember the face clearly to this day. Remarkably handsome, with a narrow nose and well-drawn eyebrows, and a mop of lustrous brown hair. The large black eyes had regarded Father with the saddest expression as Father had drawn us back and hurried us away. (Rice 14)
>
> Meyer's narrator, Bella Swan, describes her first encounter with Edward Cullen in a parallel manner:
>
> I felt a surge of pity, and relief. Pity because, as beautiful as they were, they were outsiders, clearly not accepted . . . Just as I passed, he suddenly went rigid in his seat. He stared at me again, meeting my eyes with the strangest expression on his face—it was hostile, furious . . . I'd noticed that his eyes were black—coal black. (Meyer 22-23)

Hence, writers often refer to common myths as well as the work of their predecessors when creating their own vampiric tales.

As a whole, the sub-genre of vampire fiction has expanded and evolved, however, it essentially sticks to the basic model Stoker delivered in the novel Dracula. Guiley believes that the differing adaptations of the monster have softened the ferocity of the vampire and in turn have influenced vampire fiction: "The vampire's powers are sometimes seen not as a threat but as an asset, without worry about whether those powers come from the devil" (10). In the past, vampires were only portrayed as wicked. In fact, Count Dracula can be described as uncompromisingly demonic. Today, on the other hand, there are seven dominant protagonist models in vampire fiction: 1) the relentlessly evil 2) the victim 3) the romantic figure 4) the do-gooder 5) the empathetic alien 6) the love interest 7) the eccentric minority (Guiley 10-11). Many films as well as narratives combine these traits into a central character. For instance, Meyer's Edward Cullen can be defined as a victim because his vampirism is beyond his control. He is a romantic figure and an open citizen of the world who is romantic, seductive, and philosophical. He is a do-gooder and a part of an empathetic minority that feels superior to the human race, but maintains compassion for mortals. He is the love interest of the Bella Swan. And, finally, the entire Cullen clan represents an eccentric minority, or a group of supernatural beings that have become "the family next door" (Guiley 10-11; Meyer). Hence, creative minds, like Meyer, use vampire protagonist to create more than fiction. These visionaries use their characters as vehicles for social commentary.

In the end, it is undeniable; vampires are a part of culture:

> Vampires are both textual and extra-textual creatures; one can even 'know' about them (and 'irrationally' wish to know more about them) without actually reading vampire fiction or watching vampire films. In this sense, they are 'in' culture . . . (Gelder x)

Waller suggests the vampire story has insistence on the importance of traditional wisdom, symbolic and sacred objects, and ritualized action. Vampire stories can teach about the role of the conventional in all genres, subgenres, and formulas of popular art (7). Therefore, vampires are often used to comment on the society of their creators. Stoker, for example, juxtaposed the past, the legend of the vampire, and the present, the rise of technology, as a way to remark upon Victorian England. A modern example includes the 1987 film The Lost Boys because it comments on youth, family, homosexuality, and the Californication of American society. The movie combines drama and comedy and the adolescent vampires question law and lawlessness. The film focuses on the experience of becoming involved with a cool vampire gang and the trauma of the transformation (Gelder 104). The Lost Boys is described as the Claiforian syndication of Peter Pan and the fantasy of perpetual adolescence. The movie is a reflection of the motion picture industry's reliance on film for immortal youth and beauty (Rickles 211). Rickles notes the parallel of youth and catastrophe:

> The Teen Age is televisual: it is the live transmission that is always on (even when the set is off). And that is because it is always on disaster alert. That is why the crypt in which the teen vampires hang out is the ruin of a hotel built on the fault that quaked: catastrophe builds the haunt of missing children turned teen vampires. The poster on their wall beams up the suicidal direct connection with the body, the Big One Jim Morrison rode out. Before we witness our first vampire attack, we see the sun set over amusement park rides, which rehearse and repeat the thrill of catastrophe, along a pier that is the place of the missing, the homeless, the uncanny. (210)

Rickels states that the vampirism in the film is a representation of the catastrophe or "the big one we prepare for and survive" (211). Gelder describes the deviant teen vampires:

> These are the vampires, the 'lost boys,' a double-edged title that refers not just to missing children in Santa

> Carla but also to J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan (1911) and the children who never grow up—who remain, as this novel puts it, 'gay and innocent and heartless', and who, like the vampires in the film, can fly. (105)

Gelder also believes the vampire gang represents the lure of homosexuality and that David's question, 'How far are you willing to go, Michael?' carries the gay subtext (106). Broken families are another social focus of the movie; where Michael and Sam have a mother, the 'lost boys' have a father, Max, the 'head-vamp', who is searching for a mother for his boys and has the intention of creating the perfect vampire 'Brady Bunch'. As a whole, The Lost Boys is a commentary on the visuality of American society in the 80s:

> . . . does it 'mean' anything to have the King Vampire, Max, as the manager of a video outlet? Actually, this might be an equation which reflected cinema's anxieties about its future at the time, seeing itself in the mid-1980s as under threat from videoed movies and the kind of democratising of viewer habits they promised—where less people were actually going to the movies—where more and more people, wittingly or otherwise, were instead inviting them into their homes. (Gelder 107)

In the end, The Lost Boys isn't merely a teen movie about never growing old or dying, it is a film that centers on the social issues facing the youth of California in the late 1980s.

Vampire narratives, like vampire films, also act as metaphors for prominent social issues. For instance, Michael Burstein's short story, "Lifeblood," is a individual commentary on religion. Lincoln Kliman's struggle to save the damned soul of his twelve year old son is a reflection of Burstein's personal views on the assimilation of American Jews into Christian culture (75). In the story, the seductive female vampire, Lily, is a representation of Christianity and the enticement that mainstream religion offers the undecided pre-teen Joseph. At one point, Lincoln asks Lily why she wants Joseph and she replies, "Because he is so easy to take, so defenseless. As are so many of your sons" (84). Burstein portrays vampirism as a Christian evil:

> I find it difficult to believe that a Jew could be turned into a vampire, even if he were bitten by one. Possession by a dybbuk, perhaps, but not transformation into a vampire. Vampires are not part of the Jewish Kabala. They are part of Christian lore, not Jewish. They should only be able to affect Christians. (80)

In the end, Joseph is saved because he chooses to embrace the Jewish faith. Lily, or the lure of Christian conversion, is decimated with his decision to devote himself to the religion of his ancestors. Thus, Burstein's opinion on the assimilation debate is disguised by an intriguing story of vampires, family, and religion.

Social commentary is only one reason for continuity of vampire popularity. Adams suggests, "Perhaps the myth of the vampire comes from a little bit of projection on the part of the living. We have a hard time imagining our existence after death, and it may be easier to imagine a life that goes on somehow" (1). According to Waller, the undead must be understood in the context of the living (5). Therefore, vampires are fascinating because they were once human:

"Whatever their physical appearance, their special powers and unnatural appetites, or their particular sort of immortality, the undead betray their origins and remain recognizably, disturbingly human. . ." (Waller 16). Although an audience recognizes a vampire as a physical representation for the fear of death, there is also the recognition of the vampire as an inferior. For example, human superiority is demonstrated by the fact that vampires are classified by their animalistic behavior (Snef 82). Snef believes, ". . . physical details reveal that vampires are atavistic beings who display the deliberate cruelty of primitive human beings as well as the ferocious instincts of animals" (85). Vampires represent the monstrous other (Snef 60). Thus, vampirism continues to have waves of popularity because an audience recognizes the draw-backs and benefits of humanity. Vampires are relatable.

For the most part, vampires are on a rotation, or a cycle of popularity. Since the initial publication of Stoker's Dracula in the late 19th century, almost every subsequent decade has seen a peak of interest in the undead. As a whole, fascination and fear of vampires persists on a global scale. Creative and literary minds continue to use the vampire as a means of commenting on their societies. And although certain characteristics of undead protagonists have evolved, Stoker's work remains the template for all of vampire fiction. With the current popularity of vampire literature, films, and television series, it does not appear that the mythical bloodsuckers will lose their appeal anytime soon. Furthermore, it is safe to assume that vampires will continue evolve and conform into beings that attract the attention of fresh generations for years to come.

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Endnotes

[1]In fact, vampire legends can be found on almost every continent: African vampires include: adze, asasabonsam, ataru, bori, loogaroo, obayifo, and ramanga; blood-sucking folklore in North and South America includes: abchanchu, chupacabra, civateteo, iron-fingered demon, jaracaca, the New England vampires, quazates, and tlahuelpuchi; Asian undead include creatures like the: danag, hannya, hantpare, hantu langsuir, hantu laut, huli jing, incus, kiangshi, nagasjatingarong, polong, tengu, xiang shi, yuki-onna, and the viscera sucker; European vampires include: afrit, ala, algul, Alnwick Castle vampire, alp, baobhan sith, Breslau Vampire, bruxsa, callicantzaros, chupacabra, Croglin Grange vampire, Johannes Cuntis (Pentsch vampire), dachnavoar, dearg-diulai, dhampir, doppelsauger, empusa, erestun, eretica, eretik, The Girl and the Vampire, Highgate vampire, kathakano, kosci, kozlak, krvopijac, kudlak, lampir, lhiannan-shee, liderc, ludverc, moroi, nelapsi, opji, palis, pijawica, procolici, striges, strigoi, upier, upir, The Vampire and St. Michael, varcolac, vjesci, vjiesce, vukodlak, vyrkolaka; Indian lore includes: baital, brahmaparusha, churail, mmbyu, neamma-parusha, ut, and vetala (Guiley 1-337).

18th century statue destroyed by selfie-taking tourist

upi.com

By Sarah Mulé | Nov. 11, 2016 at 1:13 PM



This statue of Saint Michael at the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon, Portugal was knocked over and irreparably damaged by a tourist attempting to take a selfie. The statue dates back to the early 1700s. Photo by Daniel Villafruela/WikiCommons

LISBON, Portugal, Nov. 11 (UPI) -- A priceless 300-year-old statue in Lisbon's National Museum of Ancient Art shattered after it was knocked over by a tourist trying to snap a selfie.

Museum officials said the statue of Saint Michael, which dates back to the early 1700s, is broken beyond repair.

The offending tourist reportedly posted a photo of the destroyed statue to Facebook and said, "It's the price to be paid for free entrances on the first Sunday of every month."

Portugal's Ministry of Culture said the accident has raised concerns about adequate security in the museum, which museum officials said was lacking.

"This misfortune has called attention to these issues," the Ministry said, adding an increase in museum staff "is underway."

Portuguese authorities are still investigating and are unsure if any charges will be filed against the tourist.

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51 years, 17 girls and one plaid dress passed down for picture day



Story highlights

In 1965, Janice Parker bought the dress for her oldest daughter

Granddaughters have kept the tradition alive

(CNN) — This is the story of a little red and green plaid dress and a family tradition it started.

In 1965, Janice Parker bought the dress for her oldest daughter Diana from a small department store in then-Wayfare, Minnesota.

For some reason, Diana took an instant liking to it. And when picture day came around for her Kindergarten class, that was her dress of choice.

Janice Parker has 5 other daughters. And a year later, when her next daughter, Lana, started 1st grade, she picked the same dress for her pictures.

And so began the treasured tradition.

After Diana and Lana came Lynelle. She wore it. So did Liza. And Corrine. And Sarah.

"My mother made sure our hair was perfect and everything had to match growing up, especially on that special picture day," Diana Orr told CNN.

Generation to generation

When the girls grew up and had children, the kids wore the dress.

When the kids grew up and had children of their own, the dress would come out for school pictures.

It's held up remarkably well. Sure, there are some rips and tears, but nothing that can't be easily fixed.

nd on it went: 51 years, 16 girls and one dress.

Until the latest hitch.

Janice Parker's youngest grandchild, Aubrey, wanted nothing to do with it.

Aubrey is a bit of a tomboy, the family says

But in the end, she too kept up the family tradition, but in her own way.

She wore the little red and green plaid dress - with a pair of pants and a baseball cap.

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65m-high Copenhagen cycle bridge as good as dead

15/09

thelocal.dk



65m-high Copenhagen cycle bridge as good as dead

The Local · 10 Nov 2016, 14:24

Published: 10 Nov 2016 14:24 GMT+01:00

Remember that 65m-high Copenhagen cycle bridge? It's probably never going to happen.

A suspended bridge that was supposed to connect two new high-rise buildings and allow cyclists and pedestrians to cross the Nordhavn harbour at a height of 65 metres continues to disappoint.

After the excitement of the project's initial announcement, the hype was tempered by the revelation that the bridge would not be open to Copenhagen residents or tourists.

Now it looks like it's not going to happen at all.

Berlingske reported that the developer behind the project, Harbour P/S, has significantly altered its plans for the prestige project along Langelinie.

At a Copenhagen City Council meeting last week, Harbour P/S announced two major changes to the project. To begin with, the developer confirmed that the bridge would not be accessible to the public. It also said, however, that it plans to carry out the project in two stages. In the first phase, it will build the so-called Marble Pier (Marmormolen) on one side of the harbour.

But it will not commit to the second phase of the project, which would entail a second building on the other side of the water and the bridge connecting the buildings.

"The project's two towers total 60,000 square metres and that is a lot. We are two institutional investors and we both have a standing policy that we only build what we can rent out. We can quite simply not run too large of risks for our members' money. The other [building] could come about if and when we can rent it out," Michael Nielen, the CEO of AFP Ejendomme, one of the co-owners of Harbour P/S, told Berlingske.

The changes in plans did not sit well with Copenhagen's deputy mayor for technical affairs, Morten Kabell.

"The consequence is now that instead of realizing an exciting project that would give a lot back to Copenhageners – including an amazing view from the bridge – we get a relatively boring high-rise," he told Berlingske.

“It is really unfortunate. I think this was pandering to people with a lot of money instead of having a visions on behalf of the city,” Kabell continued.

The 'Copenhagen Gate' project was designed by American architecture firm Steven Holl Architects and first approved in 2008 before being put on ice due to the financial crisis. The idea of the suspended bridge was to allow for daily docking and departures of massive Oslo-bound ferries.

The Local Europe AB
Östgötagatan 12
116 25 Stockholm
Sweden

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94-year-old who has been fire chief since 1953 is retiring

Oct 21, 2:38 PM EDT

ap.org

GREENSBURG, Pa. (AP) -- A Pennsylvania fire chief is announcing his retirement just ahead of his 95th birthday.

J. Edward Hutchinson - affectionately known as "Hutch" - has served more than six decades as Greensburg's fire chief but has decided not to run for a 22nd term.

The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review reports (http://bit.ly/2eq8fmX) the fire department will now search for another leader for the first time since 1953.

Hutchinson says 63 years is "a long friggin' time" and he now must pass the torch on to someone new. He's believed to be the longest-serving active chief in the state.

There has been only one interruption in his service to the department: a four-year hiatus when he served during World War II.

Hutchinson says he wants to ride off into the sunset on a horse like John Wayne.

Information from: Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, http://pghtrib.com

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107-Year-Old Swears This Daily Drink Is The Elixir Of Life

huffingtonpost.com

He's stuck to this habit for nearly a century.

11/02/2016 03:36 pm ET
Yagana ShahHuff/Post 50 Editor, The Huffington Post

"Don't worry, be happy" is one of centenarian Mariano Rotelli's mantras for a long, healthy life. But there's also a little habit he's maintained for around a century that's kept the 107-year-old in tip-top shape.



Asparagus is anti-inflammatory and provides digestive support, according to "The Longevity Kitchen," a book that explains the life-extending benefits of healthy foods. Alamy

Sarah Fay Campbell/The Newnan TimesHerald

"I've had a shot of whiskey in my coffee every morning for 100 years," Rotelli told The Newnan Times-Herald at his 107th birthday party in late October. "I went to the doctor three times in 100 years. He's dead. I'm still living."

The Senoia, Georgia resident lives with his only daughter and his son-in-law and says he isn't too picky about what kind of whiskey he gets, just as long as he gets it — though it's usually Jim Beam Black.

We're not sure if he's actually been having a bit of whiskey since he was a young boy, but there must be something he's doing right to have made it this far. "Pops," as he's known, has outlived all of his siblings as well as his wife, who died over a decade ago.

"He's never worried about anything," his daughter Nancy Tyre told The Times-Herald. He also lives every day like it's a holiday. Probably doesn't hurt one's longevity.

Whiskey might not seem like what the doctor ordered, but may centenarians we've written about have had some pretty unusual "secrets" for their long lives. The world's current oldest woman, Emma Morano, eats two raw eggs a day. And the man believed to be the oldest in the UK swears by a greasy English breakfast every day to keep the doctor away.

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700-year-old banknote found in ancient Chinese sculpture

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Oct. 20, 2016 at 11:48 AM

ARMADALE, Australia, Oct. 20 (UPI) -- A 700-year-old banknote was found inside an ancient wooden Chinese sculpture at an Australian auction house.

Mossgreen auction house shared photos of the upcoming "The Raphy Star Collection of Important Asian Art" which features several ancient sculptures, including the one that held the rare banknote.

"Also part of the collection is a 13-14th century wooden sculpture of a Luohan inside of which our specialists were thrilled to discover a rare, Ming Dynasty banknote when they catalogued the piece," the auction house said. "The sculpture and banknote will be on view alongside the many other highlights of this fine collection."

The auction house staff discovered the initially unassuming, crumpled piece of parchment before realizing it was actually among the earliest printed currency in China, according to CNN.

"This is the first time, that we know of, that a banknote has been discovered inside a wooden Buddhist sculpture," Ray Tregaskis, head of Asian art at Mossgreen, said. "We were surprised, astonished, and once we had translated [the text], very excited!"

Mossgreen Asian art specialist Luke Guan said Chinese sculptures have been known to hold various items inside.

"It's typical to find materials such as mantra rolls, relics, grains, incense and semi-precious stones that have been placed inside gilt bronze sculptures by a monk or lama," he said. "But we've never heard of anyone finding money inside a wooden sculpture before."

Mossgreen's specialists believe the bill may have been placed inside the sculpture 40 or 50 years after it was first made.

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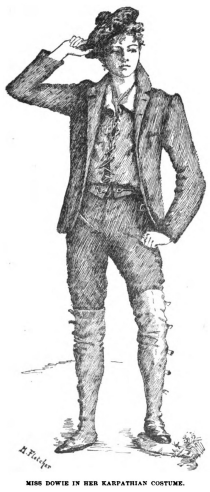
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The 1890 Version of 'Wild' Saw a 10-Week Slog Through the Carpathian Mountains

atlasobscura.com

Feminist travel writer Menie Muriel Dowie was understandably irate about her book's reception.

by Jack Goodman
June 30, 2016



MISS DOWIE IN HER KARPATHIAN COSTUME.

It was the beginning of the fall in 1890 and 23-year-old Menie Muriel Dowie was the talk of the town.

“This young lady may be taken as the representative of the fearless girl of the period,” wrote the *Birmingham Daily Post*. Another newspaper described her as “the heroine of the hour in scientific circles.”

Dowie had just delivered a paper to the British Association for the Advancement of Science on her solo travels to the Carpathian Mountains in modern-day Poland. She earned a publishing deal in the following months and wrote a bestselling record of her travels, *A Girl In the Carpathians*. Gossip columnists fawned at the extraordinary Dowie– dressed in men’s clothes and armed with a pistol–for her brave travails in a remote pocket of Eastern Europe.

But in the face of dozens of positive reviews and column inches devoted to her growing reputation in high society, Dowie wanted to set the record straight. What she wrote was “not a tale of adventure” and what she did during a summer in Poland was not, by the standards held to men, daring or brave. Dowie articulated this in a stinging rebuke to her critics in the preface of the fourth edition of *A Girl In the Carpathians*.

“Dashing forsooth! Because I smoke cigarettes and say so. Brave, because I go where any young man would go cheerfully blindfold!” Her book was nothing more than a diary of her travels and a summer’s roaming, she said. And she wrote it “with a disregard for conventions she saw no reason to respect.” At one stage, she wrote that she disliked travel, which is not “so amusing as not traveling.”



This was a time in British society when women travelers like Ellen Browning and Gertrude Bell were making waves for their adventures abroad, but Dowie saw herself differently.

“In many ways she was a woman way ahead of her time in that she wanted to live her life and live a career on her own terms,” says Jane Robinson, author of *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers*. “More modern than the modern woman. She didn’t want to be identified with any particular group. 'I’m me and I’m doing what I want to do.' That’s ultra modern."

Born in Liverpool but raised in Scotland and educated for a time in France and Germany, Menie Muriel Dowie was encouraged by her parents to hunt, shoot and fish. She was homeschooled from the age of 14 onwards and once said school didn't offer girls enough opportunities. Before she decided to become a writer, she wanted to become a surgeon. Dowie sang, recited poetry and started writing for small magazines as a teenager.

Her parents encouraged her to be adventurous and experience life outside of her social confines. Dowie's grandfather, Robert Chambers, was a famous science writer and early evolutionary biologist. After her father died, Dowie used the money she inherited to travel alone to modern day Poland in the Carpathian Mountains. From the moment she arrived, Dowie made sure she would be taken seriously and adopted a "not-to-be-trifled-with manner."



Dowie spent 10 weeks moving between villages, climbing hills, crossing rivers and sleeping in the open air. She made detailed notes on the customs and appearances of the people she met. The pistol she carried to warn off wolves and bears was never fired, although did get herself into scrapes; she broke a rib and once treated a girl who cut off the end of her finger chopping nettles.

"I knew no way to deal with the girl and her howling, but I gave her my arm to grip like mad, while I treated the finger with bread pressed into dough, cobwebs from adjacent rafters, and the pinafore," she wrote.

For her exploits Dowie won the Victorian Wreath in October 1890, a prize for "an act of womanly devotion or daring." But Dowie found the praise quite patronizing and tiresome.

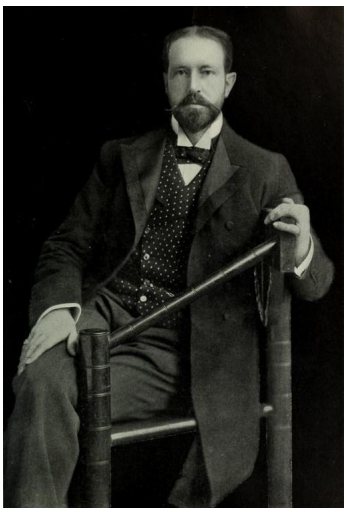
She wished for a world where women and men would be commended for bravery on equal terms and not, she wrote, "because she wears knickerbockers."

Later she added, "Ah! The vision of such a future leaves one gasping, does it not?"

Dowie's anguish may have been directed at reviews like this one, written in *Science*. The reviewer applauds Dowie for the book about the summer when she "abandoned herself to a life with the natives." Characters like Dowie are rare, the author continues, and that is a fortunate thing: "she is certainly bright, but independent almost to a fault."

Dowie went on to write fiction and her book *Gallia* sold well. Her celebrity status increased when she married the traveler and journalist Henry Norman. They had a very public divorce after Dowie had an affair with Norman's best friend Edward FitzGerald, a mountaineer. Having lost custody of her son, Dowie stopped writing and stepped away from public life. She then became a very successful cattle breeder in England. After traveling in North Africa and Europe, she spent her final years in Tucson, Arizona.

Dowie's maverick status comes in part from her position towards feminism. She became a feminist icon, says Jad Adams, a writer and expert on Victorian Britain, and she certainly, at times, associated herself with feminist causes. But she never identified herself as a feminist, which Dowie



hints at in an interview.

“I should like something said to show that I am not a woman’s rights woman, in the aggressive sense; that I do not rejoice in ugly clothes and that I am not desirous of reforming the world, or doing anything subversive of the present agreeable muddle, which is so well suited to lazy women like myself.”

Perhaps this is why she fell into relative obscurity, despite her early fame, notoriety and individualism. “She was a woman going in places and doing things that women didn’t normally do,” said Adams. “For that reason she was certainly a figurehead and someone people looked up to, but she didn’t have any sense of solidarity.”

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Basics
Divine Tiange - use hotkeys
Divine Tiange - game interface
Divine Tiange - organizational functions
Divine Tiange -FAQ Q
Divine Days Ge - China Map

Gangs	
Description gang	Gang war
FAQ war	Dong Fu battle

Beijing living area Details	
Occupational stronghold	Shopping
Place the next task	Other places

Xinshoucun task Raiders	
JX novice	Brave novice
Novice surgeon	Novice priests
Novice monks	Novice village volunteer

Quick Information

Their experience	
Integrated Experience	Warriors experience
JX experience	Surgeon experience
Monks Experience	Taoist Experience

Detailed Skills	Taoist skills
Swordsman skills	Warrior Skills



- Eight Mozu comeback -

Shura family



Although the Shura family first eight of the congregation, but the number is the minimum number of eight family, but all of them have the power to Nukiyama regret, and have cast fire spells operation talent, in addition Shura nature warlike people, like killing, and a high degree of wisdom and desire to enslave his family, so they Shura family has been a leader throughout the tribe. Shura civilian life usually for five or six centuries, and have noble blood Shura high-end, life expectancy for almost a thousand years.

Yasha clan

Yasha very large number of families, but totally non-productive, specifically to plunder, enslave other races living. They bloodthirsty aggressive nature, eating human

Monk Skills	Surgeon skills

Weaponry	Synthesis refining
arms	Synthesis refining
Armor	Single recipe
Pharmacy	Raw materials

Monster presentation	Department of Marine Mammals
Wicked system	Department Masamichi
Department beast	Xiongqin Department
Gudu Department	Gremlin Department
Monster line	Department of inferno
Necromantic	Even magic system
Department of fairy birds	Department of animal

other information	Seal animal Daquan
Get adder	List of fame

Official Information

· Game Name: Divine Days Ge

· Production Company: Yu Austrian Technology

· Operation: Universal Communications Co., Ltd.

· Address: Beijing's Dongcheng District , North Avenue, 107 days sea Building B 6 layer

· Official Website: Click here to enter

· Customer Service Tel: 010-84044508

* customer Service Fax: 010-64184489

· contact zone editor



flesh, all dashing, strong enough light and agile body. Yaksha tribe born cunning, is the group standard opportunist, long subservient to the upper surface of the Shura ruling family, but privately they often rise and fall with the Ashura clan forces, sometimes yield allegiance, sometimes rebel opposition.

One hundred family



One hundred family is different from the other races throughout the Shura fight evil perpetrators favorite features, but have a highly intelligent race, although their size little weak, but very good at magic skills. One hundred upper and lower body covered with dozens of family support eye, born with the ability to float without reliance on the activities of the feet, hands down one hundred ethnic eyes of people who are more representative of the more noble lineage, but also increasingly powerful magic, one hundred Group under long-term allegiance to the Shura ruling family, to use their own wisdom and powerful magic ability, Suan was Shura family trust and respect.

Genius Group



Genius family is a great size bulky race, it is in a more intelligent and low savage inferno eight. Genius family of people living seems only to buy food, habitat will continue to migrate in search of food, most of the Genius family like a loner, there is no concept of ethnic tribes, but they are the most faithful servant Shura family , a natural force and strong in battle few can rival with confrontation.

Xingtian family

Group criminal days Shura family for thousands of years the number one enemies, all of them courage and chivalrous physically fit, although still can not escape from the inferno



warlike habits, but unlike the Shura, Yaksha tribe as bloodthirsty and brutal. People have Xingtian family of a very high magic resistance, many abnormal state also has immunity, and all of them inherently good fury warrior, very good at melee combat skills.

Winged hawk family



Winged hawk family has huge wings and can fly in the sky flying, fast action sensitive, irritable character with the rest of the territory of the Department of Public inferno foes substandard. Winged hawk family of people born with the ability to release lightning adept at exploiting the advantages of flying in the distance cast a lightning attack, short soldiers weapon is difficult to hit the light and nimble eagle wings tribe, only a projection shader to create a greater threat to them .

Braggadocio family



Braggadocio family headed monocular strange looks, great size and similar Djinn devil, born moronic and Djinn family par. Although the brutal ethnic braggadocio rude, but it will not be as Shura, Yasha, Genius prize like bloodthirsty cruelty, eight belong to the inferno in a few less aggressive race, the number of ethnic braggadocio, but all mighty, and it has a fast healing, self-traumatic magical innate ability.

Soil Bank Group



Soil family line of people is the number of the most massive inferno, good Hori Tudun earth, and from biological attack, taking the essence of blood. Soil Bank Group has strong arms and a huge paw, thick-skinned meat hard for light short-soldiers have a high resistance, will be wearing clothes from the plunder armor. Family land line number is ambitious, but the absence of any tribal organization, Shura scattered

throughout the country, its combat effectiveness and wisdom are lower than other inferno, so the status of the public in the eight most depressed, long forced servitude by other races .

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NINGER HAD NO WITNESSES.

The Alleged Counterfeiter's Case Will Go to the Federal Grand Jury.

The examination of Emanuel Ninger, alias Joseph Gilbert, who is charged with being engaged for twenty years in counterfeiting United States notes of large denominations with pen and pencil, was begun before United States Commissioner Shields yesterday.

Paul Gifber of 156 Elm Street, bartender in a Cortlandt Street saloon, testified that Ninger bought from him on March 28 a glass of Rhine wine and asked him to changed a fifty-dollar bill. Gifber changed the bill, but he soon discovered that it was a counterfeit, and asked a policeman to arrest Ninger, having traced him to the Cortlandt Street Ferry.

Policemen testified to the arrest, and said that when he was searched he had $244.25 in good and bad money.

John Weyman, a grocer at 162 Third Avenue, testified that Ninger offered him a spurious twenty-dollar bill for a bottle of whisky.

Secret Service Agent Bagg testified that the bills in evidence were spurious.

John B. Mayo, counsel for Ninger, said he had no witnesses to call or evidence to offer. He moved that Ninger be discharged on the ground that the prosecution had not made out a case.

The motion was denied and the prisoner was held to await the action of the Grand Jury, the fixing of bail being deferred.

A Decree for Mrs. Edith Allen.

Mrs. Edith Allen secured a decree yesterday from Justice Truax, in Special Term, Part III. of the Supreme Court, against her former husband, Vanderbilt Allen, directing that her alimony of $1,000 a year shall be paid out of the income of trust funds, amounting to $35,000, left for her husband bv his mother, Mrs. Ethelina Vanderbilt Allen. The decree also provides that $1,583.33 of arrears of alimony shall be paid out of the income of the trust fund. Mrs. Allen obtained a divorce in April, 1887, and in 1892 Mr. Allen was married again in Pennsylvania without permission of the New-York Court. He has not paid any alimony since October, 1892.

Lecture on English Cathedrals.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Lubeck, rector of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Zion and St. Timothy, in West Fifty-seventh Street, will lecture on "Some English Cathedrals" in the parish house to-morrow evening for the benefit of the altar chapter of that church. The entrance to that house is 333 West Fifty-sixth Street, and tickets may be obtained at the door. The Rev. Dr. Lubeck is thoroughly familiar with the noted cathedrals in England, and his descriptive talk, supplemented as it will be by numerous steroscopic views, will undoubtedly be both instructive and entertaining.

Doctors Dine in Brooklyn.

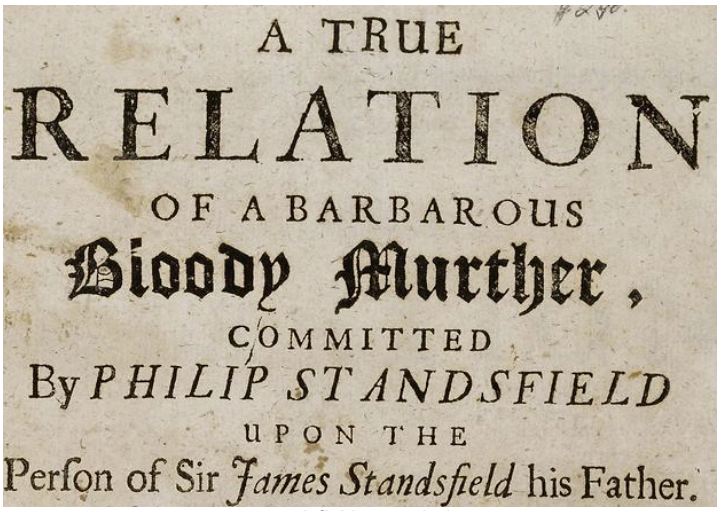
The fourth annual dinner of the Alumni Association of St. Mary's Hospital was eaten at the Hotel St. George, Brooklyn, last night. Among those present were Dr. O. A. Gordon, Dr. Frank J. Freel, Dr. Joseph J. O'Connell, Dr. P. A. Brennan, Dr. W. G. Reynolds, Dr. J. P. Glynn, Dr. John J. McCoy, and Dr. T. F. Mylod.

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Halloween Horror Post #5: How a bloody corpse was used in a 17th century forensic test

strangeremains.com

By strangeremains*on*October 5, 20160


A TRUE
RELATION
OF A BARBAROUS
Bloody Murther,
COMMITTED
By PHILIP STANDSFIELD
UPON THE
Person of Sir James Standsfield his Father.

standsfield_pamphelet

People used to believe that the corpses of murder victims could identify their killers – sort of a zombie testimony.

Courts all over Europe, up until the 19th century in some places, practiced a ritual called the bier-right. The bier-right was a type of trial by ordeal during which an accused killer was forced to touch the body of a murder victim. If the corpse bled, then the accused was found guilty. It was believed that a dead body could intentionally make its wounds weep because a corpse could still act a little while after death.

Historians think that the last time a bier-right was practiced in Scotland was during the investigation of the murder of Sir James Standsfield in 1688. In this case, James Standsfield's bleeding corpse led to the conviction and execution of his son, Philip Standsfield. A pamphlet titled, "A True relation of a Barbarous Bloody Murther, Committed by Philip Standsfield upon the Person of Sir James Standsfield his Father…" explains the gory details.

The body of Sir James Standsfield was found floating in a river near Edinburgh in 1688. Many people considered James' death suspicious so surgeons were summoned from Edinburgh to view his body.

> "The Corps being taken up in *Morum* Church, two Chyrurgeons were appointed to view it, who making an Incision about the Neck, found in one part under the Ear much stagnated or clotted Blood, and that the Joynts had been distended, also by the blackness of the Face many symptoms of strangling appeared, finding at the same time no water in the Stomach or Bowels, with many other Observations, up which they concluded him to be murthered before he was thrown in the water…"

James Standsfield's corpse supposedly identified his killer when his relatives had to move his body to the coffin after the autopsy.

> "And what further happened was exceeding remarkable, in which the finger of God, to discover more plainly the Murtherer visibly, appeared was, that a Speech being made, after the Wounds were sewed up, that some of *Sir James's* nearest Relations should take him up off the place where he lay and lift him into his Coffin, the son, *viz Philip Standsfield*, attempting to raise the left side of his head and shoulders, whilst one *Mr. Row* raised the other side, the Blood sprung out upon *Philip Standsfield's* Hand, at which wiping it upon his Coat and struck with terror and remorse, he cried out, *Lord have mercy upon me*, and so retired to a Pew, where the Chyrurgeon ordered him some Treacle-water to prevent his swooning away."

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The bizarre story of a Canadian bank robber, Taylor Swift and a mysterious plane crash in Tennessee

nationalpost.com

Richard Warnica| September 23, 2016 5:33 PM ET



At about 3 a.m., on Oct. 29, 2013, Ryan Dent, an employee at the Nashville International Airport, heard what sounded like the coughing chug of a small plane overhead. It was a mild Tennessee night in fall, about 12 C with no wind, but it was foggy. And no one who was there — the night a long, dark story came to a very strange end — could see beyond a few hundred feet.

On the ground, Dent heard the engine speed up then stop suddenly with four concussive whompfs, like the sound of a truck misfiring, according to a statement he later gave investigators. Alerted by the noise, he walked to a nearby fence and peered through the mist. He couldn't see anything — no flames, no firefighters rushing from the terminal nearby — so he went back to work.

It would be another five hours before anyone noticed anything amiss. At about 8:50 that morning, a crew member on an airplane taxiing for departure spotted what looked like a piece of engine cowling on a runway. When a team went to investigate, they found not just an engine, but an entire plane, busted up and burned out, the pieces scattered over hundreds of metres of runway and grass.

Inside the cockpit, the investigators found a single body, blackened and fractured beyond recognition, debris embedded in its flesh.

The accident attracted significant attention in Tennessee. A phantom plane had crashed at a major airport, after all, and no one noticed for several hours. The mystery only deepened when investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) arrived. They identified the plane as Canadian. It had slipped over the border unnoticed the night before. And the pilot, well, that's when things got really weird.



His name was Michael Callan, his fingerprints confirmed. He was a member of the Windsor Flying Club, in Windsor, Ontario. And he was perhaps the most famous bank robber in Windsor history.

But that wasn't the strange part. Among the documents investigators gathered was Callan's application to join the flying club. It included his address — at a kind of flophouse near downtown Windsor — his occupation: unemployed, and right at the bottom, as emergency contact, in big block capitals, a single, unexpected, name: TAYLOR SWIFT.

Two days after the crash, on Oct. 31, the Windsor Star ran a story identifying Callan as the dead pilot. Murray Landerkin, a retired bank manager, read the paper that day in his living room in a neat brick house not far from the Windsor airport. When he came to Callan's name, he said recently, the hair stood up on the back of his neck.

In 1997, Landerkin had been the manager of two local CIBC branches. On Dec. 5 of that year he was in the smaller location, running an employee seminar on bank robbery. After the meeting, Landerkin lingered in the back for a minute. That's when he heard it. "I'll shoot somebody. Don't press the f—- alarms. I want your money."



At first, Landerkin thought it was a practical joke, an employee riffing on the seminar. But when he walked out front, he saw a masked man with a gun, yelling at his staff. The stickup man was tall and slim, with an athletic build. He wore a brown leather jacket and dark jeans. He had a laser sight on his pistol. When Landerkin stepped into view, the man pointed it at his chest. The red dot settled near his heart.

That holdup was one in a series, all involving a lone gunman, a stolen car and unusual cruelty. Gary Nikota spent 30 years as a Crown attorney in Windsor. He prosecuted hundreds, maybe thousands of criminal cases. But to him, those robberies still stand out for the "remarkable, gratuitous violence" of the thief.

In at least five robberies — although police believe there were several more — the stickup man barged into bank branches, pistol in hand. He taunted staff. He threatened death. He kicked and punched a female teller in the back. In one holdup, he kept his laser site on a pregnant employee's belly while he marched her into the safe. "I mean, you don't rob a bank and not inflict some terror on people," Nikota said. "But this went way beyond that in terms of nastiness."



The robbery spree lasted about about 11 months. What stopped the man in the end "was kind of comical," Nikota said. On a single day in November 1997, he held up two banks, including, for a second time, Landerkin's CIBC. For his getaway car that day, he chose a brand new Chrysler Intrepid stolen from a lot outside Toronto. It was the kind of ride that stood out in a car town like Windsor. So when the robber dumped it at the airport, it didn't take police long to track it down.

Roger Francis was working the front desk at the Windsor Flying Club, on the airport grounds, that day. He remembers seeing a tall, athletic man enter the building, stroll into the bathroom and come out wearing different clothes. The man sat in the lobby for about half an hour then left.

Another club employee, a longtime flight instructor named Karl Klinck, identified the man to police as Michael Callan, a former club member and aspiring pilot. That tip proved crucial. Four days after Klinck fingered him, police arrested Callan in the lunch line at the local Salvation Army.

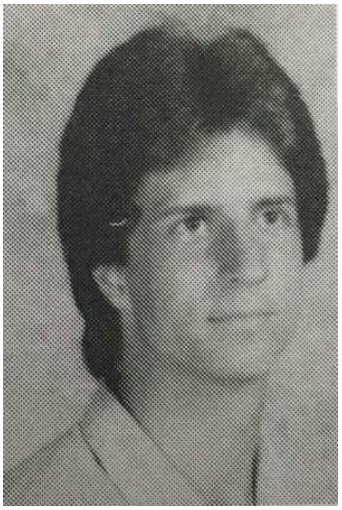
Callan's stickup spree was over.



In the months after the crash, NTSB investigators pieced together what they could about the accident. They found nothing wrong with the plane, at least those parts of it that survived the fire. So they turned to Callan himself. Why was he in the United States, and why Tennessee?

The investigators thought they found something close to an answer in Callan's Canadian parole records. According to an NTSB report, during a mental health review in 2012, Callan said he'd developed a "significant interest" in a celebrity who lived at that time in Nashville. He had written her several letters that had, according to the evaluator, "the flavour of stalking." The NTSB report didn't name the celebrity in question. But most assumed, based on Callan's flight club application, that it was Taylor Swift.

That's certainly possible. Court records reveal Callan was obsessed with Swift for several years. But she wasn't the only one.



After Callan's arrest in 1997, a reporter from the Windsor Star went to his mother's house. She appeared relieved when she heard the news of his capture. "Did he hurt anyone?" she asked. No, the reporter replied. "Thank God," she said.

Callan was born on July 26, 1968. He was the fourth child and second son in a stable, middle-class home. His mother, Elizabeth Callan, was devoutly religious. But she told the Star she was too easy on Michael growing up. "We were tough with all three of them, except for him," she said.

Childhood photos show Callan as a blond, big-eyed baby with a narrow face who grew into a slim, muscular young man. He fished and played baseball. He lifted weights. His mother told the Star he was her sweetest child.

At some point all that changed.

According to yearbook records, Callan spent at least three years at Windsor's W.D. Lowe, a technical high school. After high school, he graduated from the Canadian Aviation Institute, but to his dismay, Elizabeth Callan told the Star, an Air Force training program turned him down.

For a few months in his twenties, Callan worked as a bouncer at Silvers, a strip club in Windsor. The owner there still remembers him as "a clean guy" who "never looked like a bum." But reports from his trial reveal he was mostly unemployed in those years.

Callan lived with a girlfriend for a time and rotated between being broke and having large wads of cash. He also lived with his mother for several years, but she eventually asked him to leave. According to stories from his trial, she found bullets in their home.

Police believe Callan robbed his first bank in 1994, when he was 26 years old. They never charged him with that crime. Instead, he went to trial in late 1998 for the five robberies beginning and ending with Murray Landerkin's CIBC.



Callan's trial lasted several weeks, but the jury took less than two hours to find him guilty on every charge. The judge sentenced Callan to 12 years in prison, plus the two he had already served.

For Nikota, that was largely the end of the case. He expected to see Callan out on parole before long. But as the years went by, Callan stayed inside. In fact, he served almost his entire sentence in custody, which is exceptionally rare in the Canadian system.

Callan's parole records reveal the reasons why. From the day he entered the prison system, Callan was a terrible inmate, racist and abusive and increasingly bizarre. In one prison, he wrote a guard a vulgar letter. He arranged to be naked and masturbating whenever others, always female, would appear at his cell.



He also became obsessed with several celebrities. At a parole hearing just before his final release in the spring of 2011, the board learned he'd been writing letters to a teenaged actress. He signed them not "Michael Callan" but "Leo Piloto Leon" — a new name he had adopted.

The object of Callan's obsession goes unnamed in those documents. She might have remained unknown to the public, except for this: Before Callan could be released, the police in Windsor applied for what's known as a Section 10.2 peace bond. They wanted conditions placed on his release. At the hearing for that bond, Callan, representing himself, spoke of Swift, telling the court he wrote her a "stack of letters" over two years. But he also said that, by 2011, he had moved on. He had a new fantasy, about a new star, one even younger than Swift.

Her name was Miranda Taylor Cosgrove, always stating her full name. The star of the Nickelodeon show iCarly, Cosgrove was 17 when Callan started writing to her. He raved about her virginity in the letters. He drew her pictures. He told her he wanted to get married. He even offered her power of attorney over his finances.

"I admit being obsessed with you and only you," he wrote in one letter read aloud in court. "I think it's pretty obvious how I feel," he later testified. "Now it's just a question of how she feels."

Right before Callan was scheduled for release, Windsor police warned Cosgrove's parents about him, leading them to beef up her security at an event in Memphis, Tenn.

After the hearing, a provincial judge imposed a raft of conditions on Callan's release, including a curfew and a broad a no-contact list that included Cosgrove, but not Swift.

Days later, Callan walked out of the Windsor jail, a free man for the first time in almost 14 years. He had taken no training inside. He had almost no employable skills. He was 42 years old. He had robbed at least five banks and he was in love with a teenage celebrity. So, naturally, he tried to become a pilot.

In December, 2011, when he'd been out of jail for all of six months, Callan was arrested at a Chapters bookstore after a patron saw him masturbating to what looked like child pornography on his laptop. Once in custody, police identified Callan in another porn-related incident. He spent several more months in jail.

For all his problems, Callan did manage to complete his pilot's training once outside. By 2012, he was a member in good standing at the Windsor Flying Club. It's not clear, even today, why the club let him back in. He was a convicted bank robber, public exhibitionist and obsessed with teenage celebrities.

But none of that apparently bothered the club brass. "The board discussed it and said 'Well, who are we to judge?'" Dave Gillies, the club president in 2013, told the Windsor Star after the crash.

No board members would speak on the record for this story. Multiple calls and emails went unreturned.

Callan had no job and little money, but he paid his dues at the club and managed to scrounge up enough money to rent planes on a regular basis. In 2013, he used one to carry out his final, doomed flight.

On Oct. 28 Callan booked a Cessna 172R for an overnight trip to Pelee Island, in nearby Lake Erie. In an email to the NTSB, a club manager said an employee heard him taking off at about 6 p.m. Callan closed his flight plan, indicating arrival, about two and a half hours later.

The next sign anyone had of Callan was around 2 a.m. at the Nashville airport. Duong Lam told investigators he thought the plane was coming from the east. It passed over Hangar 14, where Lam was working. He looked into the sky, but the fog was too thick, he wrote in a statement. He couldn't see anything in the air.

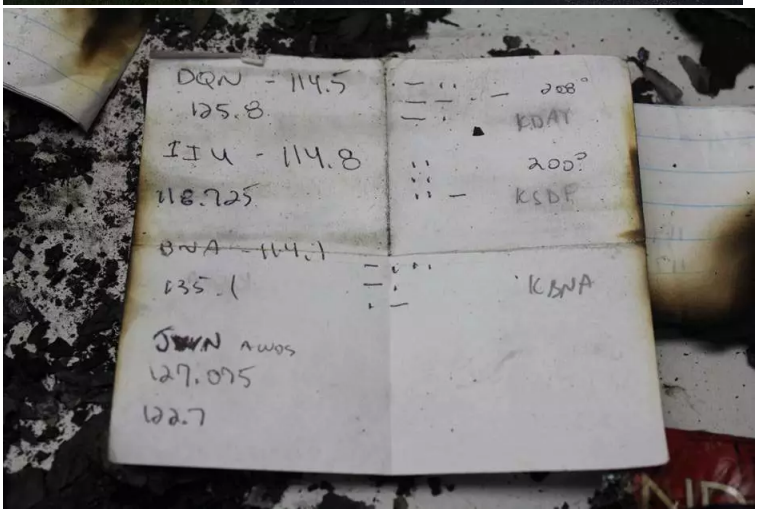
Radar records would later show Callan's Cessna first entered a 20-mile nautical ring around the Nashville airport at 1:50 a.m., according to the NTSB. He took the plane through little loops at the edge of the airport airspace then spent five minutes doing circles over the runways. He wasn't on any manifest or flight schedule. He never made contact with the tower. But eventually, he tried to land.

Callan was an experienced pilot. But he wasn't certified to fly in the kind of weather he hit in Nashville. He lost control. The plane hit the runway, tumbled and burst into flames. The wreckage tore along the ground for almost 200 metres. The propellers slashed into the concrete. The engine flew free.



What was left of the plane came to rest about 150 metres off the runway threshold. By the time the fire stopped, there wasn't much left. Most of one wing was gone. The tail survived. A melted heap of char sat where the cockpit used to be.

In August 2015, 22 months after the crash, the NTSB released what's known as an accident brief. It's only a few paragraphs long. But it includes the investigators' official hypothesis on what happened that day and why.



Found among the wreckage were notes suggesting Callan had navigated from Ontario to Nashville by hand. His autopsy revealed a blood alcohol level of 0.081, just over the legal limit. He was drunk, in other words, but not hammered. Blood tests, meanwhile, suggest he died on impact. He didn't live long enough to perish in the flames.

Based on Callan's criminal history, his erratic behaviour and his "significant interest" in a Nashville celebrity, the investigators wrote, Callan likely made an "impulsive decision" to fly to Nashville. He didn't know enough to expect the fog, and when he hit that weather, he couldn't make his way through.

As far as the investigators could determine, Callan told no one of his plans. They don't know for sure why he flew to Nashville or who, if anyone, he intended to see. He didn't speak much to his family. He had few friends. He wrote no final notes.

The probable cause of the crash then, stripped of aeronautical jargon, was this: a pilot trained to fly by sight hit deep fog. He couldn't see. He tried to land. He failed.

Michael Callan — aka Leo Piloto Leon — was a bank robber, celebrity obsessive and frankly, an unpleasant man, according to many who knew him. He longed for some kind of escape in life.

In one letter to Miranda Cosgrove, Callan said he dreamed of flying the two of them to the Arrington Vineyards outside Nashville. That vineyard, owned by the country duo Brooks and Dunn, is about 50 kilometres from where he died.

In court once, a prosecutor asked him about that letter. "It's my dream," he said.

"You just happened to pick Nashville?" the prosecutor asked.

He replied: "A guy's got to have a dream."

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The strange history of books bound in human skin.

By Megan Rosenbloom

Wednesday, October 19, 2016

Festival of the Cult of the Supreme Being, by Pierre-Antoine Demachy, 1794.

In 1794, by decree of the National Convention under the leadership of Maximilien Robespierre, all villages in France were obliged to celebrate the first (and what would prove to be the last) Festival of the Supreme Being. In the village of Meudon, just south of Paris, a parade escorted a woman dressed as the goddess Reason to her temple, which was known as the Church of Saint-Martin before the revolutionaries repurposed the churches. Those celebrating in Meudon had little idea that they were the talk of the concurrent grand festival in Paris.

On the Champs de Mars, near where the Eiffel Tower would one day stand, Robespierre and his artist friend Jacques-Louis David had devised quite a spectacle for the Festival of the Supreme Being, with a man-made mountain at its center and atop it a giant tree of liberty. Members of the National Convention weaved through the crowd carrying bouquets of flowers, fruits, and ears of corn, wearing "national blue" coats (no longer were they royal blue) and suede culottes. Some in the crowd whispered that their culottes were made from the skins of recently executed Christians and other enemies of the Republic, at a special tannery for producing human leather in Meudon.

These rumors, so outlandish today, likely seemed within the realm of possibility in the bloody and unmoored atmosphere of 1794. Reports of atrocities committed on behalf of the revolution flooded in from all corners of France; sometimes thousands of people were executed in a town in a single day. Often those carrying out political murders would themselves face the guillotine when the political winds shifted yet again. With the Festival of the Supreme Being Robespierre had attempted to insert deism into the Republic as a replacement for both the king's Catholicism and the revolutionary atheism that followed, an initiative that was received coolly by his colleagues at the National Convention. About a month after the festival, Robespierre fell out of favor and was executed, signaling the end of what became known as the Reign of Terror. The mass killings—coupled with the revolutionaries' dramatic flair in staging executions—made claims of horrific pageantry involving human remains believable, and these rumors reverberated throughout the centuries.

A Republican general named Beysser was said to have worn culottes fashioned from the vanquished Chouans while riding his horse in battle. King Louis XVI's cousin Louis Philippe, who renamed himself Phillipe Égalité and joined the Jacobins in revolution, reportedly sported human-skin culottes impressively made of one piece of human skin with no sewing. In addition to human-hide fashion, talk proliferated about human-skin-bound books, now called anthropodermic bibliopegy. At Le Bal du Zéphir, a legendary (and possibly fictitious) ball held inside a French cemetery, human-skin-bound leaflets of *Droits de l'Homme* were said to be given out as party favors. To this day books belonging to men like Armand-Jérôme Bignon, librarian to Louis XV, bear inscriptions such as "religatum de pelle humana" or "reliée en peau humaine," though these are the only possible indicators of their bindings' disturbing pedigree.

Real anthropodermic books do exist, originating in France as well as Britain and the United States and primarily created in the nineteenth century. The most legendary French skin tomes—Marquis de Sade's *Justine et Juliette* bound in a woman's skin or French erotica with a visible human nipple on the cover—prove to be the most difficult to find. Such dark curiosities are tucked away in private collections (if they exist at all) and difficult to examine and determine if they are really human leather. Only now is it scientifically possible to separate reality from myth. I am a member of a team of chemists, librarians, and museum professionals at the Anthropodermic Book Project who have identified forty-seven allegedly anthropodermic books in public libraries and museums. Of the thirty we have tested so far, twelve have bindings from a nonhuman animal of origin and eighteen are indeed tanned human skin. The scientific process of peptide mass fingerprinting, or PMF, uses unique peptide markers in the collagen of each animal family to determine the leather's source. The DNA in these books is too degraded from time and tanning to be successfully extracted by today's testing methods. With the PMF test we now know that the College of Physicians of Philadelphia's 1709 copy of John Locke's *An Essay on Human Understanding* (*Libri IV de intellectu humanu*), highly influential among the thinkers of the French Revolution, is bound in cattle hide, contrary to the inscription by an Ethel Barnett that claimed: "This ancient book has Latin within and is bound in a nice little piece of my skin." Testing of a 1671 prayer book at the University of California's Bancroft Library (the book's inscription states it was rebound in the skin of its former owner, a clergy member executed in the French Revolution) found that its pebbly black cover comes from a horse, not a human. Yet the binding on Brown University's copy of *Mademoiselle Giraud, My Wife*, the controversial 1891 French novel with lesbian themes by Adolphe Belot, is indeed of human origin, as are three seventeenth-century French gynecological works, which at some point were bound in the skin of a poor American woman who died of trichinosis and tuberculosis in a Philadelphia hospital in 1868.

Scratching the surface of the history of any real human-skin book usually reveals a doctor was the one wielding the knife. At a time when physicians were climbing social classes and enjoying the trappings of their new wealth and status—including becoming collectors of fine art and books—at least a few chose to preserve the hides of deceased indigent patients to bind copies of their own work or of those that they admired, like anatomist Andreas Vesalius. (Brown University's Hay Library holds a large, beautiful anthropodermic Vesalius, in addition to three other books proved to be bound in human skin.) At the same time, public executions were one of the only legal sources for obtaining bodies for dissection. Doctors sometimes removed the skins of infamous murderers and used them to bind books about their deeds—a fact well known enough to serve as a kind of deterrent. The most infamous case is the pocket-sized book bound in the skin of William Burke, half of the Scottish duo Burke and Hare, who murdered sixteen people in order to sell their bodies to doctors for dissection. Like his unfortunate victims, Burke could not escape the anatomist's knife in the end, and his skin book resides in Surgeons' Hall Museum in Edinburgh. While doctors today refuse to participate in executions, citing the principle of "first do no harm," doctors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries worked with their governments to ensure their access to dead bodies for anatomical learning.

William Burke's death mask and pocket book, Surgeons' Hall Museum, Edinburgh.

Aside from being the source of the first pervasive rumors of books bound in human skin, the French Revolution was a turning point in the professionalization of medicine. Prior to that time, only members of the aristocracy consistently enjoyed access to doctors. Commoners were cared for at home by their families—except for the poor and homeless, who sometimes received care at charity hospitals run by the Catholic Church. While establishing new secular state structures, the Republic

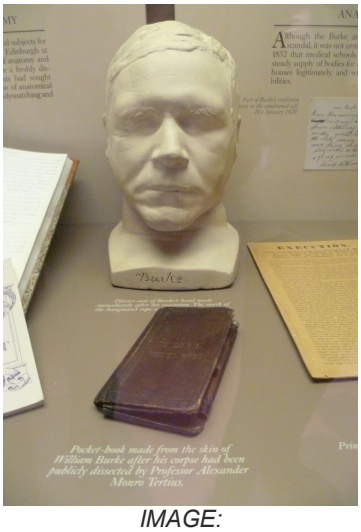


IMAGE:

made a priority of elevating public health by providing greater access to health care. That required stricter training guidelines for physicians, and state-sanctioned licenses emerged as a way to regulate public health. Most important, doctors in training would spend time learning at the bedsides of patients in clinics, setting the foundations for clinical medicine. Coinciding with the development of diagnostic tests and tools (such as the stethoscope), a new mandate for at least three years of scientific education and supervised experience in a clinic became known as the Paris School. This medical-educational paradigm eventually became standard in the Western world. The increase in the number of patients doctors saw regularly gave them a greater body of clinical experience to draw upon, but it also pulled focus away from individual patients, their stories, and how those stories shaped the clinical encounter. Michel Foucault wrote in *The Birth of the Clinic* that this structure led to the development of the clinical gaze, where diagnostic science and stresses of the job contributed to doctors viewing patients as disembodied symptoms, diseases, and organs instead of as fellow human beings. The book bound in human skin could serve as an example of that tendency. Patients' skins became raw material for binding a doctor's prized books instead of the thin membrane between a human's internal workings and the outside world—an erasure of individuals with families and inalienable rights.

The revolutionaries forged the concept of these inalienable rights first with the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* in 1789, and then with the expanded Constitution in 1793. One of the additions in the intervening years dealt with the abolition of slavery: "Every man can contract his services and his time, but he cannot sell himself nor be sold: his person is not an alienable property." The book bound in human skin alienates the person from a corporeal self. The resulting artifact, while made from a human, becomes a dehumanized object. It is for that reason we tend not to gaze upon an average bookshelf and envision rows of individual cows. Viewed through the lens of doctors taking liberties with patients' hides, the allegedly anthropodermic copy of the 1793 Constitution and *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* held at the Musée du Carnavalet in Paris seems all the more perverse.

Lawrence S. Thompson, former director of libraries at the University of Kentucky, wrote the bulk of the scholarship about anthropodermic bibliopegy in the mid-twentieth century. His early writings repeat the rumors about Meudon and tie them to the Carnavalet book, but in subsequent writings, he casts doubts: "The yet unwritten unprejudiced history of the French Revolution will devote several chapters to this propaganda about the Meudon tannery." Thompson wrote about visiting Paris and seeing the Carnavalet book himself, which he said was a common stop for learned men on the grand tour. He described the book as light green in color and looking like "the skin of a suckling pig." Following in his footsteps some half-century later, I found the book in question is a rich, deep camel brown with no hint of green. It is gold tooled with delightful marbled endpapers adorned with vibrant bubbles of blue, yellow, black, white, red, and brown. Inside are copious handwritten notes consistent with the time in which the book was created, explaining the steps for ratifying the Constitution (though the 1793 version was never fully enacted). A different hand on an adjacent page gives its printing details and the telltale signifier "reliée en peau humaine." The museum's acquisitions register states that it was purchased from the estate of the Marquis de Turgot and refers to its "famous binding in duodecimo having belonged to [the naval officer Pierre-Charles] Villeneuve and passing for being made in human skin imitating calf." Our Anthropodermic Book Project team is currently working to get permission to test this book's leather. If such testing

reveals it to be human, it would be the first legend of French Revolution human-skin objects that proved to be true, once again altering our understanding of the atrocities of the era.

Though such stories from this period were widespread and varied, the rumored origins of these macabre objects always trace back to the Château de Meudon. The castle sat on a slope overlooking Paris, four kilometers away. An observatory now on the same site takes advantage of its unobstructed views. In 1695 Louis XIV acquired the chateau and greatly expanded it to serve as a residence for his son Louis XV, whose designer furnished it in the highest Regency style. Louis XV used the chateau occasionally as a hunting lodge, but preferred the nearby Château de Choisy or the Château de Bellevue (where his mistress Madame de Pompadour resided), rendering Meudon mostly unoccupied. Under Louis XVI, the Château de Meudon fell into further disrepair. With the revolution the royal properties were stripped of their finery, leaving Meudon a ghostly shell of its former glory. It was in this ruin that a tannery specializing in leather made from human-skin was purportedly built, despite the property's distance from the water required to undertake such an enterprise. Nevertheless rumors of the tannery would arise, dissipate, and be taken up anew well into the twentieth century in histories both popular and academic. Today most scholars and Meudon's town historical society dismiss the tannery claims as pure fantasy and royalist propaganda, but other secret dealings did take place on site.



IMAGE:

Demolition of the Château of Meudon, by Hubert Robert, 1806. J. Paul Getty Museum.

Beginning with the French Revolution and into the early nineteenth century, France fought wars on multiple fronts as kingdoms such as Prussia, Austria, Great Britain, and Spain sought to exploit what they viewed as France's weakened state. But France and her artillery were stronger than initially thought, and the fledgling republic won decisive victories throughout Europe. The National Convention called for a mass conscription of soldiers to fight on these fronts and employed some disused chateaus for the war effort. Eventually a tannery was built in the nearby town of Sèvres, where tanners produced soldiers' shoes made from the typical, nonhuman leather. At Meudon, inventor Nicolas-Jacques Conté repurposed the chateau and some of its surrounding fields for shooting ranges and ballistics testing, focusing on top-secret tests of military uses of hydrogen balloons. In the spring of 1794, the balloon company Compagnie d'Aérostiers was formed at Meudon. By summer the French deployed balloons to survey the coalition army, leading them to victory at the Battle of Fleurus. So Meudon did have a history of covert operations: it was the first place to put hot-air balloons to military use. That of course is a much less macabre distinction than the human skin tannery for which the village became known. Until a book from the French Revolution era tests positive for being of human origin, these rumors may prove to be little more than hot air.

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Roundtable | A Brief History of Medical Cannibalism laphamsquarterly.org

Curing what ails us with mummy, blood jam, and human fat.

By Bess Lovejoy

Monday, November 07, 2016

For hundreds of years, Europeans regularly consumed human flesh and blood. The practice was widespread among both the poor and the aristocracy—including at least a few members of British royalty. Although the specifics varied according to place and time, such cannibalism reached its peak in Germany, England, Italy, and France toward the end of the Renaissance, just as Europe was supposedly shaking off its long intellectual slumber and heading into the warm glow of the Enlightenment. As barbaric as it seems today, the drinking of human blood, the smearing of human fat, and the distilling of human bones into a much-prized spirit were all done for a single purpose: healing.

For most of us today, the corpse is an object of horror or revulsion, but for the early moderns it contained potent mystical properties. Many of these recipes relied on sympathetic magic: powdered blood helps bleeding, human fat helps bruising, skulls help with migraines or dizziness. Physicians and patients believed that ingredients obtained from corpses were most potent if they had died violently. For instance, the great sixteenth-century physician Paracelsus wrote that after a man was hanged, his "vital spirits" would "burst forth to the circumference of the bone." It was thought that when death came suddenly, a person's spirit could stay trapped within its mortal coil for at least enough time that the living might benefit from its power.

While epileptics of ancient Rome drank the blood of slain gladiators, the beverage found particular favor as a health tonic during the Renaissance. The blood was typically harvested from the freshly dead, but could also be taken from the living. Such medicinal vampirism had no shortage of adherents: Marsilio Ficino, a highly respected fifteenth-century Italian scholar and priest, said that elderly people hoping to regain the spring in their step should "suck the blood of an adolescent" who was "clean, happy, temperate, and whose blood is excellent but perhaps a little excessive." Another popular remedy, sometimes attributed to Saint Albertus Magnus, involved distilling the blood of a healthy man as if it were rose water; the result was said to cure "any disease of the body," and "a small quantity…restoreth them that have lost all their strength," according to one 1559 text. By the 1650s there was a general belief that drinking fresh, hot blood from the recently deceased would cure epilepsy, as well as help with consumption. Meanwhile, dried and powdered blood was recommended for nosebleeds or sprinkled on wounds to stop bleeding.

If fresh or powdered blood proved somehow inconvenient, one could also follow the recipe for blood jam given by a Franciscan apothecary in 1679. As recounted by Richard Sugg in his 2011 book *Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians*, the first step was to take blood "from persons of warm, moist temperament, such as those of a blotchy, red complexion and rather plump of build." The next step was to "let it dry into a sticky mass." After that:

> Place it upon a flat, smooth table of soft wood, and cut it into thin little slices, allowing its watery part to drip away. When it is no longer dripping, place it on a stove on the same table, and stir it to a batter with a knife…When it is absolutely dry, place it immediately in

> a very warm bronze mortar, and pound it, forcing it through a sieve of finest silk. When it has all been sieved, seal it in a glass jar. Renew it in the spring of every year.

Blood was far from the only component of the human body deemed medicinally useful. Another, arguably more popular, ingredient in the medical treatises and apothecaries of Renaissance Europe was *mumia*, or mummy. While today we associate mummies with museums and sometimes horror movies, their initial source of interest for Europeans was medicinal. The term itself has undergone an odd evolution, noted Sugg, who drew on the research of historian Karl Dannenfeldt to show how the word transformed from *mumiya*, for wax—used in early Arabian medical writings to refer to a natural mineral pitch found on certain mountainsides in Persia—to the *mummy* of the eleventh century, a "pitch-like substance, produced in Egyptian corpses by the arts of mummification." By the twelfth century *mummy* began to refer more to the corpse and less to the pitch used to preserve it, until it lost its earlier association entirely. (It could also refer to bodies preserved by North African sandstorms and whole corpses, often of executed felons, preserved in the manner advised by Paracelsus—which involved days of treatment with herbs before hanging the flesh out to dry, with the resulting product looking like cured meat.)

European demand for mummy grew significantly in the fifteenth century, when merchants began plundering Egyptian tombs and bringing the results back to the apothecaries of Europe. In the late sixteenth century, surgeon Ambroise Paré claimed it was "the very first and last medicine of almost all our practitioners" against bruising. Mummy was a significant commodity by the eighteenth century, taken in tinctures for bleeding or used in plasters against venomous bites or joint pain—so significant, in fact, that there was also a thriving trade in fraudulent mummy made from the poor, criminals, or animals. (In 2007 relics found in a Parisian pharmacy and said to belong to Joan of Arc were shown to come from an Egyptian cat mummy.) Mummy was also made into a pigment beloved by the Pre-Raphaelites called "mummy brown." Both medicine and paint could be found for sale in some European pharmacies into the twentieth century.

While mummy was seen as virtually a panacea—an entire apothecary cabinet wrapped up in dried brown flesh—human fat was also a valued remedy. It was rubbed on the skin to ease the pains of gout and taken internally (in powdered form) to help with bleeding or bruising. It could also be used in the form of plasters. Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne—physician to several English and French kings as well as to Oliver Cromwell—recommended a pain-killing plaster made of hemlock, opium, and human fat. In 1694 Paris you could buy fat made from people at the drugstore, although there was more to be had if you went straight to the executioner. In Munich, Sugg found, the executioner delivered fat to the city's apothecaries by the pound until the mid-eighteenth century.

Skulls were another commodity prized for their healing powers. The seventeenth-century English physician John French offered at least two recipes for distilling skulls into spirits, one of which he said not only "helps the falling sickness, gout, dropsy" and stomach troubles but also was "a kind of panacea." (The other recipe was better for "epilepsy, convulsions, all fevers putrid or pestilential, passions of the heart.") English king Charles II, an enthusiastic chemist with his own laboratory, is reported to have paid six thousand pounds to a professor at a local college for a recipe for distilled powdered skull, which thereafter became known as "the king's drops." The remedy was popular for a variety of complaints and seems to have often been mixed into wine or chocolate. In at least one case it was used as a sort of "mother's little helper" by a woman named Anne Dormer, who wrote in 1686 to her sister Lady Elizabeth Trumbull: "I apply myself to tend my crazy health, and keep up my weak shattered carcass, broken with restless nights and unquiet days. I take the king's drops and drink chocolate, and when my soul is sad to death I run and play with the children." Moss that had

grown on skulls, known as usnea, was thought to be especially powerful; it was pushed up the nose to stop nosebleeds. (It actually may have helped, as any powdered substance would have.)

Medical cannibalism and vampirism became most pervasive just when reports of New World cannibalism begin to circulate among Europeans. For people such as Joseph Hall, bishop of Exeter, who in a 1634 sermon raged against "bloody Turks, man-eating cannibals, mongrel troglodytes feeding upon buried carcasses," cannibalism became shorthand for all that was abject, excessive, and taboo. It was an "imaginative black hole," wrote Sugg, that "sucked in a variety of other transgressions or taboos and formed the boundary marker of a realm into which good Christians dare not enter." Used as a symbol of everything basest in human nature, New World cannibalism was also employed to dehumanize the native inhabitants and justify their slavery.

Barbarism, of course, is relative ("barbarous" originally just meant anyone who wasn't Greek), a point Montaigne made in his essay "On Cannibalism" when he compared the cannibalism of Brazil to the violence of sixteenth-century religious wars. But what many Europeans failed to grasp was that for Native Americans, cannibalism was eminently social and occurred only within a well-defined set of rituals. Far from being "senseless violence," it was often found as part of mourning rituals meant to reintegrate the deceased into the tribe, as with the Wari of Brazil or among other tribes in Peru, Paraguay, and Venezuela. In many of these tribes, funerary cannibalism was part of a multiday ceremony where even the youngest infants took some broth simmered with the flesh of the deceased as a means of incorporating the dead into the future life of the tribe. Burial in the cold, wet ground seemed as horrific to them as human stew does to us. Even among tribes practicing aggressive cannibalism, war captives were consumed as part of a religious ceremony that sometimes was preceded by months of special treatment as an honored guest.

Europeans, by contrast, consumed the dead as other. The medicinal ingredients made from corpses came not from friends or loved ones but from the most abject members of society—executed criminals, the poor, the unknown. During the seventeenth century the English imported Irish skulls plucked from battlefields to be sold to the pharmacies of Germany; for the English, the Irish were seen as deeply inferior. As Sugg noted, "corpse medicines were often derived from bodies alienated, in various ways, from ordinary humanity—distant, most of all, from *you* (whether you were merchant, thief, apothecary, physician, or patient). In many ways, the Irish perfectly fulfilled this criterion in the minds of the English." It's a small example, but one that serves to reinforce a theme: the Europeans ate strangers, while the indigenous peoples of the New World ate friends. Whichever practice seems the less civilized depends on you, dear reader.

Explore Flesh, the Fall 2016 issue of Lapham's Quarterly*.*

Bess Lovejoy

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A Calendar Page for November 2016

blogs.bl.uk

01 November 2016

For more information about the Bedford Hours, please see our post for January 2016; for more on medieval calendars in general, our original calendar post is an excellent guide.



Add_ms_18850_f011r

Calendar page for November from the Bedford Hours, France (Paris), c. 1410–1430, Add MS 18850, f. 11r

Winter is beginning to close in on the calendar pages for November from the Bedford Hours.



Add_ms_18850_f011r_detail1

Detail of miniatures of a man feeding pigs and the zodiac sign Sagittarius, from the calendar page for November, Add MS 18850, f. 11r

November saw a pause in the agricultural calendar of the medieval era, and so in this month we often see different sorts of labours. A common one can be found at the bottom of the first folio for this month; in the miniature on the lower left a man is at work beating acorns from a tree with two sticks. Below him a group of three hogs are feasting on the acorns, a delicacy given to them at this time to fatten them up for winter. To the right is a centaur archer, charmingly dressed in a gorgeous surcoat, for the zodiac sign Sagittarius.

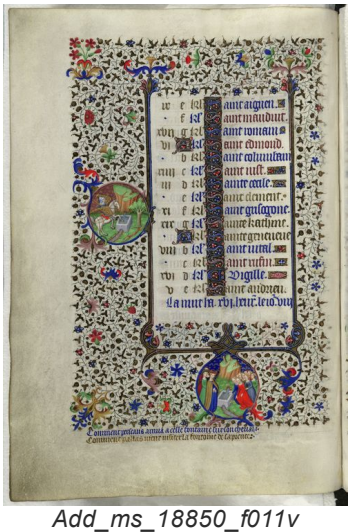
Detail of a marginal roundel of the Nine Muses, from the calendar page for November, Add MS 18850, f. 11r

On the middle right of the folio is a miniature of a group of nine women surrounding a stream and pool of water. The banners they carry identify them as the Nine Muses, the Greek goddesses of inspiration for science and the arts that were later adopted into the Greek pantheon. In some versions of their myths they are described as water nymphs, and in one origin story they were born from four sacred rivers which Pegasus caused to spring forth — a possible explanation for the landscape of this miniature. Rubrics at the bottom of the folio tell us that November 'is attributed to the nine wisdoms' because of the number nine.

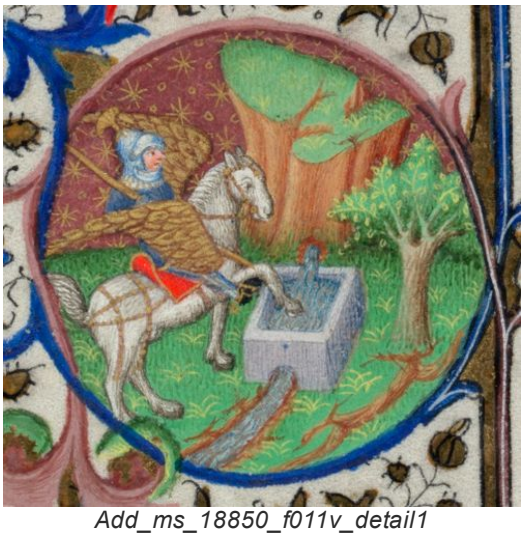
Calendar page for November, Add MS 18850, f. 11v



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The emphasis on the Muses continues in the following folio. On the middle left an armoured man is mounted on a winged horse that has one foot (somewhat gingerly) in the waters of a fountain or pool. The rubrics tell us that this man is Perseus, and the horse must therefore be Pegasus; we may be seeing a scene of the birth of the Muses. At the bottom of the folio the Muses themselves are in evidence beside their spring, kneeling before a well-dressed lady. This is intended to represent Athena on her visit to 'the font of wisdom', although this aristocratic and almost matronly version of the goddess is an unusual one.


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Detail of marginal roundels of Perseus and Pegasus and Athena and the Muses, from the calendar page for November, Add MS 18850, f. 11v

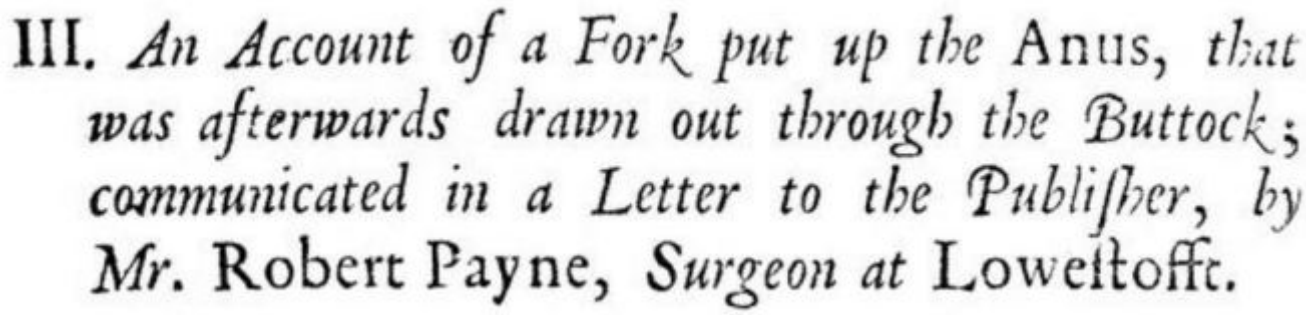
Sarah J Biggs

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A fork up the anus - Thomas Morris

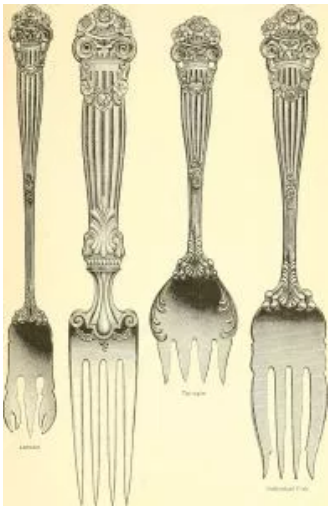
thomas-morris.uk


III. *An Account of a Fork put up the* Anus, *that was afterwards drawn out through the Buttock; communicated in a Letter to the Publiſher, by Mr.* Robert Payne, *Surgeon at* Loweſtofft.

Some of the best titles in the history of medical literature are to be found in the early volumes of the *Philosophical Transactions*. This example comes from 1724, and was sent in by Mr Robert Payne, a surgeon from Lowestoft in Suffolk:

James Bishop, an apprentice to a ship-carpenter in Great Yarmouth, about 19 years of age, had violent pains in the lower part of the abdomen, for 6 or 7 months; it did not appear to be any species of the colic; he sometimes made bloody urine, which induced Mr. P. to believe it might be a stone in the bladder. He was very little relieved by physic; at length a hard tumour appeared in the left buttock, on or near the glutaeus maximus, 2 or 3 inches from the verge of the anus, a little sloping upwards. A short time after he voided purulent matter by the anus, every day for some time.

This is the old sense of the word ‘tumour’ – not necessarily a neoplastic growth, but a swelling of any description. Eventually its surface broke. The surgeon suspected it was an anal fistula – an anomalous channel between the end of the bowel and the skin. But events soon proved him wrong:



Shortly after, the prongs of a fork appeared through the orifice of the sore, above half an inch beyond the skin. As soon as the prongs appeared, his violent pains ceased; I divided the flesh between the prongs, according to the best of my judgment; and after that made a circular incision about the prongs and so with a strong pair of pincers extracted it, not without great difficulty, handle and all entire; the end of the handle was besmeared with the excrement, when drawn out.

Naturally. This was a surprisingly large item of cutlery:

It is 6 inches and a half long, a large pocketfork; the handle ivory, but is dyed of a very dark brown colour; the iron part is very black and smooth, but not rusty.

The young man was reluctant to explain how he had managed to get himself in this predicament; at least, not until he was threatened with the withdrawal of his allowance.

A relation of his, a Gentleman in this neighbourhood, who sent him to be under my care, the Reverend Mr Gregory Clark, Rector of Blundeston, on whom, in a great measure, his dependence is, threatened never to look upon him more, unless he would give him an account how it came; and he told him, that, being costive, he put the fork up his fundament, thinking by that means to help himself, but unfortunately it slipped up so far, that he could not recover it again.

The moral of this latest cautionary tale: if you're constipated, it's better not to stick a fork up your bottom. Mr Payne adds a postscript:

PS He says he had no trouble or pain, till a month, or more, after it was put up.

Posted on 7th July 2016Author Thomas MorrisCategories Unfortunate predicaments

4 thoughts on "A fork up the anus"



1. **Tessa Gabbert** says:
8th July 2016 at 9:39 am

With all the fun being had with enemas during this time, he decided to try a forking fork?



2. **Al Hubbard** says:
8th July 2016 at 3:21 pm

In a bizarre way it's nice to know that people were as un-thinking then as they are now…….



3. **Stan Roelker** says:
9th July 2016 at 7:19 pm

Very interesting website. I am thankful I live in a more modern age of surgery and knowledge than those poor people that suffered with these ailments. The ones that suffered from mental illnesses during these primitive times really deserve our sympathy. We have come a long way (relatively speaking) since then and still have a long way to go. But discoveries in the fields of medicine/surgery/DNA/genes, etc. will continue to improve the human condition.

4. Pingback: Whewell's Gazette: Year 2, Vo. #48 | Whewell's Ghost

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A giant nude statue in California is stirring controversy

startribune.com

By JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press
October 21, 2016 — 2:25pm



SAN LEANDRO, Calif. — There have long been complaints about the lack of women in the tech industry. Now there's a towering female figure, in a tech park across the bay from San Francisco, although not quite what some people had in mind.

A 55-foot tall statue of a nude woman unveiled this week in the working-class community of San Leandro is stirring controversy and a lot of conversation.

The statue — roughly three times as tall as Michelangelo's David — is made of steel mesh in the form of a graceful dancer, with an arched back and arms stretched overhead. At the base of the statue is a message in 10 languages that says: "What would the world be like if women were safe?"

The debate is not over the statue's artistic merit or its message of female empowerment, which is aimed at the general public, not the tech industry. It centers on whether the 13,000-pound nude is appropriate in public.

"If she's a ballerina, she should have some clothes on," said Tonette Watts, 57, a resident and mother of a teen girl, who stopped and stared at the statue on her way to work. "If you've got kids you do not want them seeing that."

Another parent, Keith Verville, 48, studied the sculpture and then asked: "Why is it so big? And SO not clothed?"

The statue, called "Truth is Beauty," is on private property at the edge of a new tech office complex — in a highly trafficked and visible area just across from San Leandro's commuter rail station.

Many people, including city officials, have welcomed the statue as a reflection of the changing demographics in San Leandro, where young millennials now outnumber older residents.

"This is something I'd never have thought would come to San Leandro," said Mayor Pauline Russo Cutter. "It's edgy and modern, and it makes me proud."

The statue debuted in 2013 at Burning Man, the annual counterculture celebration in the Nevada desert. It was then bought by developers of the complex, for a price they haven't disclosed, under a requirement by the city to include public art at the site.

Cutter said some city officials initially weren't thrilled by the choice but ultimately liked the idea of starting a conversation about art. The mayor says the statue sends a powerful message of female strength that's more apparent when seen up close.

The sculptor, Marco Cochrane, says he was marked as a child by the rape of a neighborhood friend and tries through art to bring attention to sexual assault and to the fear of many women, but also to the strength women feel when not afraid.

"She feels safe and she is loving herself in that moment, and hopefully people can feel that feeling," Cochrane said of the statue. "It's a beautiful woman, and part of it is to draw men in. Then they look down and see the message and they go, 'Ohhhh.' I hope that happens thousands of times."

As word spreads about the statue, it's becoming a popular selfie spot.

"She is exceptional," said Jo Sutton, 43, a high school art teacher who hopes to bring her class to see the statue.

Businessman Michael Fennell, 73, stood taking pictures from several angles to send to his son, a sculptor in New York.

"This is a world-class statue," Fennell said. "This is not a woman cowering because the world is against her. This is a woman saying, 'Here we are! We have arrived!' I love it."

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A Skeleton Found in a Castle Could Be the Key to Cracking a 17th-Century Cold Case

smithsonianmag.com

A murder mystery complete with royal intrigue

By Danny Lewis
smithsonian.com October 18, 2016 2:49PM

Today, any scandal by a member of the United Kingdom's royal family will likely end up plastered on the front page of gossip magazines. But for centuries, intrigue among blue bloods carried much deadlier consequences. Now, as Alison Smale reports for *The New York Times*, a skeleton recently unearthed in a German castle could shed light on a 17th-century cold case linked to a then-future monarch.

Before the rise of United Kingdom's current royal family line, the House of Windsor, and before the House of Hanover, the House of Stuart ruled from 1603 until the line ended in 1714 with the death of its last reigning monarch, Anne Stuart. As she left no living heirs (and much of her family was barred from taking the English throne because they were Catholic), the throne then went to the nearest Protestant relative of the Stuart line: Georg Ludwig, making him King George I of Great Britain.

Georg was married to his first cousin, Sophia Dorothea of Celle, but Sophia's life was far from a fairytale. Her marriage to George was one of politics, and there was little love lost between the two of them. George humiliated his wife by openly taking mistresses and parading his lover, Ehrengard Melusine von der Schulenburg, about the court. For her part, Sophia fell in love with a Swedish count by the name of Philip Christoph Königsmarck, whom she devised plans to flee her unhappy life and elope with, Becky Ferreira reports for *Motherboard*.

Then, in July 1694, Königsmarck vanished without a trace after paying Sophia one last visit.

The question wasn't what happened to Sophia's would-be savior—most people assumed that Georg had caught wind of the affair and had Königsmarck killed for cuckolding him. More curious was what happened to his body afterward. At the time, some reported that Königsmarck's corpse was tossed into a river, or buried somewhere outside of Leine castle in Niedersachsen, Germany, where that he had visited Sophia in that fateful evening, Ferreira reports. But a recent find by a construction crew renovating that very castle suggests that Königsmarck may have never left at all.

Back in August, crews working on part of Leine castle uncovered a long-dead skeleton. Early analysis of the remains by researchers at Lund University indicates that the bones are centuries old, which could put them in the running to be Königsmarck's long-lost body. However, there could be an answer soon—scientists at the university are working on ways to extract DNA samples from the bones in hopes of comparing it with samples from Königsmarck's living relatives to see if they can make a match, according to a statement.

"If it really is the bones of Königsmarck, [it] would be a sensation," Thomas Schwark, director of the Historical Museum of Hanover, tells Isabel Christian and Simon Benne in German for the newspaper *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*.

While Königsmarck's end may have remained a mystery for centuries, Sophia's is no secret: George I had her essentially imprisoned in Castle Ahlden in Saxony when she was 34 to live out the rest of her life, Ferreira reports. If the recently discovered remains turn out to be Königsmarck's, it would put his story to rest. But the tale of Sophia and Königsmarck will live on—via the hundred of love letters that they wrote each other that have been preserved and can be found today at Lund University.

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A surprising history of the creepy clown

By Fiona Macdonald 19 October 2016

bbc.com

BBC As the panic about evil clowns continues to build, Fiona Macdonald finds that the dark side of the modern circus entertainer goes back to ancient Rome.



"Day after day he sat before the mirror, brush in hand, marking his features, wiping them clean, and starting again, until finally a face emerged from the candlelight that bore a grin so incendiary it refused to be erased," writes Andrew McConnell Stott in his acclaimed biography The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi.

"It began with a thick foundation of greasepaint, applied to every exposed inch of face, neck and chest… He fixed it with a cloud of powder, then painted a blood-red wound, a mile-wide smear of jam, to form the gaping, gluttonous cavern of a mouth. The eyes, wide and rolling, were arched by thick brows… each cheek received a red chevron that conveyed insolently rude health while being simultaneously suggestive of some exotic beast of Hindu demonology."

As a description of a mask, it is disturbing. As a description of the modern clown, it is insightful: when these purveyors of mayhem moved from the stage to the circus ring, they continued to be as unsettling as they were amusing.



(Credit: Alamy)

Joseph Grimaldi is seen as the forerunner to the modern clown – an annual 'clown's service' is held at a church in London in his honour (Credit: Alamy)

It was at the turn of the 19th Century when the British pantomime star Grimaldi honed his alter-ego Joey, a character that was the forerunner to the clown we know today – currently terrorising people around the world in a spiralling 'clown-demic'. Reports of clowns attempting to lure children into woods in the US state of South Carolina first emerged in August. Since then, there have been sightings of clowns behaving in menacing ways around the world: the social panic has led to a backlash, with arrests, school lockdowns and local officials banning clown costumes at Halloween.

McDonald's has limited Ronald McDonald's public appearances and a 'Clown Lives Matter' march scheduled in Arizona had to be cancelled after organisers received death threats.

The craze has been condemned by professional clowns, who claim it might threaten their livelihood and "risks permanently damaging the reputation of the artform". Yet clowns have not always been unthreatening children's entertainers: when Grimaldi transformed himself into Joey, he was tapping into a tradition that stretched back thousands of years.

Gallows humour

There are accounts of a funny man in ancient Rome who performed impressions of the deceased – at their own funerals. The *archimimus* was allowed to offend even mourning family members. Lucius M Sargent recounts how Suetonius, in his Life of Tiberius, described one at the funeral for the emperor Vespasian. "It was his business to imitate the voice, manner and gestures of the defunct," writes Sargent. "The fellow openly cracks his jokes on the absurd expense of the funeral."



(Credit: Alamy)

Jester figures attended ancient Roman funerals, as this image of a procession in Pompeii circa 50 AD shows (Credit: Alamy)

The *archimimus* of Rome took liberties in the same way as the court jesters of medieval European royalty. "The court jester was given licence to say things that might be rude or impolitic or socially unacceptable – even about the king," says Benjamin Radford, author of Bad Clowns. "He could make fun of a king's weight or how young his concubines were, and not be put to death for it because of the clown's role as a truthsayer.

> It's a mistake to ask when did clowns go bad – because they were never 'good' to begin with – Benjamin Radford

"If you take a broader look at the history of the clown, they have always been an ambiguous figure. Sometimes they're laughing at themselves, sometimes they're laughing at you – sometimes they're the victim, sometimes you're the victim. It's a mistake to ask when did clowns go bad – because they were never 'good' to begin with," he says. "You see this in the harlequin character, and of course in Mr Punch – that is a classic evil clown archetype which has been performed in England for more than 300 years. It's this beloved character who is both funny and evil. That's an irresistible stew to many people."

Created in the Italian commedia dell'arte, the Harlequin character took on a different role as pantomime developed in England in the 18th Century (Credit: Shutterstock)

Radford sees echoes today. "Donald Trump has exploited aspects of the evil clown perfectly – he's a showman, a performer, he insults people and then when called on it, he says 'I was just joking' – he does it for attention, as clowns do. Regardless of how you feel about Trump, there are many



(Credit: Shutterstock)

clear parallels to the evil clown character."

Masking fears

In his research, Radford was surprised by the range of places in which the archetype appears. "Once you begin picking up the threads and identify common themes in the evil clown character, they pop out," he says.

For centuries, the Cherokee people of North America have performed a ritual reacting against outsider intrusion. The Booger Dance begins with a prelude in which tribe members dance together for around 30 minutes; then a group of up to 10 males arrive, wearing masks representing foreigners – often disfigured as though infected with smallpox. American anthropologist Dr Frank Gouldsmith Speck observed performances in 1935 and 1936 at a Cherokee reservation in western North Carolina. In his book Cherokee Dance and Drama, he describes how the masked company "boisterously enters the house where the night dance party is held. The maskers are systematically malignant. On entering, some of them act mad, fall on the floor, hit at the spectators… and chase the girls."



(Credit: Mathers Museum of World Cultures/Flickr)

Booger masks of the Cherokee people of North Carolina are worn to represent outsiders during the performance of a ritual dance (Credit: Mathers Museum of World Cultures/Flickr)

This is the tightrope walked by the clown: anarchy contained just enough to allow for laughter

There is humour as well as menace in the ritual. For the main part, each masked man "performs awkward and grotesque steps, as if he were a clumsy white man trying to imitate Indian dancing". This continues "until all the masked visitors have competed in drawing applause by their obscene names and clowning". At the arrival of the Boogers, Speck notes, "when the first invader was questioned about his nationality and identity, he resoundingly broke wind and this was greeted by risible applause".

This is the tightrope walked by the clown: anarchy contained just enough to allow for laughter, a threat that dissolves into an object of ridicule. When that balance tips the wrong way, it's a quick slide into horror. Philosophy professor David Livingstone Smith believes the mismatch between appearance and action is what makes clowns creepy.

Psychologists have found that people find clowns creepy because they can't see their real expressions (Credit: Alamy)



(Credit: Alamy)

"Clowns are peculiar because they're meant to be delightful and amusing but a lot of people find them disturbing," he tells BBC Culture, referencing the 2016 research paper On the Nature of Creepiness. Psychologists Francis McAndrew and Sara Koehnke of Knox College in Illinois asked more than 1,000 people to rate the creepiness of a list of occupations as part of a wider survey. "Clowns won the creepiness jackpot," says Livingstone Smith.

The study concluded that "being 'creeped out' is an evolved adaptive emotional response to ambiguity about the presence of threat": in other words, as Smith wrote on the website Aeon, "a person is creepy if we are uncertain about whether he or she is someone to fear".

The fears of a clown

This inherent creepiness was taken to an extreme with the idea of the 'killer clown': the character that pranksters are currently bringing into streets and alleyways across the globe. Some argue that this began with the arrest of serial killer John Wayne Gacy in 1978. Gacy had dressed as 'Pogo the Clown' at children's parties, and made a series of clown paintings while on death row. He is often touted as the inspiration for Pennywise in Stephen King's 1986 horror novel It (King has recently spoken out about the 'killer clown' trend, saying: "time to cool the clown hysteria – most of 'em are good, cheer up the kiddies, make people laugh".)



(Credit: Alamy)

Stephen King's 1986 horror novel It featured a killer clown, Pennywise, played by Tim Curry (pictured) in a TV adaptation (Credit: Alamy)

Yet it's a strand of popular culture that extends back far beyond Pennywise. Ruggero Leoncavallo's 1892 opera *Pagliacci* (which means 'clowns' in Italian) features a clown who discovers his wife is cheating on him, and murders her on stage. In one of the opera's arias, the clown laments that his job is to make the audience laugh, even if he is crying inside – he later sings "*Se il viso è pallido, è di vergogna*": "if my face is white, it is for shame". French playwright Catulle Mendes claimed Leoncavallo stole the plot from his 1887 play *La Femme de Tabarin*, in which a clown also murders his cheating wife on stage: as she is dying, she smears her husband's lips with her blood.

The potential for clowns to invoke fear was widely recognised at that time. In 1879, the French writer Edmond de Goncourt wrote that clowns' "frolicking and jumping doesn't try to amuse the eye, but

rather manages to give birth to troubled astonishment and emotions of fear and almost painful surprises from this strange and unhealthy motion of body and muscle [with] visions of Bedlam, of the amphitheatre of anatomy, of the morgue." He calls clowns "modern phantoms of the night", whose actions are "idiotic gesticulations, the agitated mimicry of a band of madmen".



(Credit: Alamy)

Serial killer John Wayne Gacy dressed as 'Pogo the clown' at children's parties: this is one of the paintings he made while on death row (Credit: Alamy)

Madness was arguably part of the appeal of Grimaldi. Trained in clowning by an abusive, tyrannical father, he retreated into childhood with the character Joey. According to Stott however, this "was categorically not a return to innocence – there was little comfort to be had in revisiting a period of his life that had been unrelentingly complex and traumatic". Grimaldi had been left crippled by injuries from decades of slapstick tumbling, and was in constant pain. "I am 'Grim all day'," he joked, "but I make you laugh at night." Prone to depression, with an alcoholic son who died at the age of 30, Grimaldi took to the bottle himself and died in poverty.

Make 'em laugh

At the age of 25, Charles Dickens was asked to edit Grimaldi's memoirs, shortly after the great clown's death in 1837. Dickens had already written The Pickwick Papers, which featured a character said to be based on Grimaldi's son: "the glassy eyes, contrasting fearfully with the thick white paint with which the face was besmeared; the grotesquely-ornamented head, trembling with paralysis, and the long skinny hands, rubbed with white chalk – all gave him a hideous and unnatural appearance".

Stott has written that, through these memoirs, "laughter and misery becomes the balance-beam on which Grimaldi's existence is constantly weighed as every career triumph is paid for with a proportionate personal agony, and every moment of joy countered by grief."

It's the belief that clowns are meant to be harmless that is recent, not the idea that they are unsettling. "There's an ambiguity about what kind of thing they are," says Livingstone Smith. "If clowns reconfigured themselves such that the ambiguity was diminished, they wouldn't be as disturbing." But arguably, they'd also no longer be clowns.

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The new Eccles Theater installs a 'Zion Ceiling' so it can now serve booze

fox13now.com

Posted 2:11 pm, October 20, 2016, by Ben WinslowUpdated at 02:18pm, October 20, 2016

SALT LAKE CITY — The new Eccles Theater has finally installed a "Zion Ceiling" and can now serve alcohol in its lobby, Utah's Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control confirmed to FOX 13.

The multi-million dollar theater opens this week. Utah's liquor control authority had previously refused to grant a full-service restaurant license to the theater because of a problem with the bistro area of the restaurant. As FOX 13 reported in September, the sweeping views of the lobby provided a look into the area where drinks would be poured — a violation of Utah liquor laws.

Under state law, restaurants that wish to serve alcohol must have a separate preparation area (nicknamed "Zion Curtains") where drinks are made out of view of diners. The Eccles Theater had to install a "Zion Ceiling" because drink preparation could be viewed from above.

Here's what it looked like in September when FOX 13 reported on it:



Salt Lake County, which runs the theater, said it always intended to comply with the law and was working to make architectural changes in time for the grand opening. The DABC provided a photo of the new "Zion Ceiling" to FOX 13 showing the area had been enclosed with a door and a canopy.

Here's what it looks like now:



Zion Curtains have long been criticized for making Utah look "weird" without being effective. Defenders of the separate preparation areas have said they protect children.

After inspecting the "Zion Ceiling," DABC spokesman Terry Wood told FOX 13 the agency granted a full-service liquor license to the theater.

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Accidental thief returns car with apology, gas money

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press October 27, 2016

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A Portland, Oregon, woman says her red Subaru was stolen from her driveway — and then it reappeared with an apology note and gas money.

Erin Hatzi tells The Oregonian/OregonLive (http://bit.ly/2eeHeRh) that her husband noticed the car was missing on Tuesday night and she posted security camera stills on Facebook, asking for help finding it.

Police caught a woman returning the vehicle to Hatzi's driveway Wednesday evening. The accidental thief had instructions from a friend to pick up a different red Subaru in Hatzi's neighborhood and returned when the friend said it wasn't her car. She brought along $30 for gas and a note expressing apologies.

Police told Hatzi that some older Subaru keys are interchangeable, making it easy for the woman to make off with the wrong car.

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Information from: The Oregonian/OregonLive, http://www.oregonlive.com

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Addict, Priest, Luchador: The Unbelievable Life of Fray Tormenta | VICE Sports

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Addict, Priest, Luchador: The Unbelievable Life of Fray Tormenta

January 8, 2015Eric Nusbaum

Addict, Priest, Luchador: The Unbelievable Life of Fray Tormenta

I

Padre Fray Tormenta lingers in the courtyard in front of his church on a cool Sunday morning in December. The day's first mass has just let out, and he is passing time before the second, basking for a moment in the sunlight, and greeting members of his congregation as they make their way inside.

This is a humble neighborhood, and nobody is especially dressed up. Not even the church itself, a small 17th century building tucked off a main street. Its yellow exterior is slowly chipping away, and the high interior walls are stark white and mostly unadorned. The Padre moves in that deliberate, priestly way, gliding in his purple robe from one group to another, smiling at old ladies, and signing autographs for children.

"He's very compassionate," says a middle-aged woman named Sofia, who has just exited the early mass. "He helps everybody so much. The truth is, he's reached out his hand to us, and for that reason, everybody loves him."

When the crowd outside begins to thin, he disappears into his office and reemerges a few moments later wearing a yellow and red *lucha libre* mask in addition to his vestments. Trailed by two altar boys wearing tattered cassocks over their blue jeans, he makes his way back across the courtyard, through the large church doors, and down the aisle to the lectern.

He has the manner of a showman, and could just as easily be entering the Arena México, the 15,000-seat "Cathedral of Lucha Libre" in Mexico City, accompanied by valets on his way to the ring. But this is not the Arena México. This is Parroquia San José in Texcoco, a medium-sized city about 15 miles northeast of the capital.

In theory, a priest wearing a lucha libre mask sounds strange. But in the case of Padre Fray Tormenta, it looks and feels completely normal. Perhaps because he designed the mask himself.

"The yellow," he says, "is for the liveliness that Fray Tormenta must display in the ring. The red is for the blood that Fray Tormenta must spill on behalf of his orphanage."

Standing before a dozen rows of full pews, the crowd spilling out into the courtyard, the Padre makes a show of removing the mask and folding it ceremoniously. He takes a deep breath, and begins, in a quiet voice, with the liturgy.



Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee

II

The next day, sitting in his spare office in the parish, his body seemingly held together only by stubbornness, Padre Fray Tormenta recalls the moment 40 years ago when he at last decided to take his final vows and become ordained. He had just been called back to Mexico after seven years of seminary in Spain and Italy. He had not yet opened his orphanage, and not yet become a star of lucha libre, known throughout Mexico as a living, breathing folk tale, and known abroad as the true story behind two movies: the priest who literally fights for orphans in his care.

Back then, he was merely Sergio Gutiérrez, a seminarian with second thoughts about the priesthood. He was working as a lay minister in Veracruz, a port city on the Gulf of Mexico, and had been assigned to pray the rosary at a parish in a run-down neighborhood by the beach. The parish was full of *"drogadictos, prostitutas, y delincuentes*." When he finished the rosary and went outside, he found that while he had been praying, some of those very junkies, sex workers, and juvenile delinquents had filled the inside of his car with sand.

"Who did this?" he asked the group.

"We don't want clergy around here," one of the parishioners said. "Get the hell out of here."

Then the parishioner made him an unexpected offer: fight for their respect. If Sergio was willing to fight one of them, they would welcome him into their community. But if not, he should get the hell out and not come back. "If I fight, what would people think?" Padre Tormenta remembers asking himself. "But if I don't fight..."

At this point in the telling, Padre Fray Tormenta leans back in his chair, as if savoring the moment. His life, at least as he recalls it, moves in the grand gestures of a magical realist novel. Everything is a metaphor, and the precise details of his autobiography are as fluid as the memories of an old man. The desk where he sits has become a sort of accidental monument to those memories--to a life that, even in progress, even bogged down in the logistics of running a parish and an orphanage, has become a myth. Stuck between the glass top and the wooden surface is a collage of photos, schedules, financial records, business cards, and hand-scrawled phone numbers.

Recently, the sense of heightened reality that surrounds the Padre has only been amplified, as health problems have made the old priest and those around him increasingly cognizant of an end. Nearly 70 years old, he is diabetic, has cysts in both of his kidneys, and is losing his vision. In

November, when he had surgery to remove a 13-pound tumor from his stomach, the doctors also had to yank out a section of his large intestine.

Dramatic pause complete, Padre Tormenta crosses himself the same way he crossed himself at the church that day in Veracruz. "*Perdoname señor*," he says. "Forgive me father. But I'm going." He took a beating, but he got some blows in, too. And after the fight, he looked up at the other addicts and asked, "Who's next?"

This was a life-defining moment, but it was not the moment when Padre Sergio decided to take his final vows.

III

Veracruz was where Hernán Cortés began his civilization-shattering march to Tenochtitlan in 1519--the march that would set Mexico on the irrevocable path to Catholicism. More than three centuries later, Veracruz was where American troops landed to retrace Cortés's steps on the way to conquering Mexico City, built on Tenochtitlan's ruins. They did so in a war that began over the question of Texas--the state where Salvador Lutteroth, the father of lucha libre and founder of the Arena México, was first exposed to professional wrestling in the 1930s.

It's easy to see Catholicism and wrestling as simply colonial inheritances. But both institutions have been remade by Mexico in its own image.

A decade after Cortés's troops killed Moctezuma and conquered Tenochtitlan, a peasant named Juan Diego claimed to see an apparition of a woman on a hill north of the city. The woman spoke to him in his native Nahuatl and identified herself as the Virgin Mary. A few days later, her image appeared on his cloak. Catholicism may have been an import, but this was an indigenous miracle resulting in an indigenous icon. The Virgin of Guadalupe was a decidedly New World version of the familiar Mary.

In present day Mexico, her image is ubiquitous: seen on bumper stickers, baseball hats, church walls, billboards, rendered in a million different ways by artists across the the country. Worship of the Virgin of Guadalupe is a fundamental part of Mexican Catholicism. The Basilica of Guadalupe, built at the base of the hill where Juan Diego had his vision, has become one of the most visited holy sites in the world.

In her book *The World of Lucha Libre*, sociologist Heather Levi recalls another time the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared on a piece of fabric. It was in July, 1962, when El Santo--The Saint, lucha libre's greatest hero-made the switch from *rudo* (villain) to *técnico* (hero). Lucha libre, in its most essential form, is a constant replaying of the morality tale: good vs. evil. The pronounced difference between rudos and técnicos is not just a convenient metaphor, it is the sport's central conceit, and one of the aspects that separates lucha libre from American professional wrestling, where gray areas are more welcome.

According to Levi, who relates the story second-hand, "El Santo accomplished the transition by appearing in the Arena with an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe on his silver cape." By the time Fray Tormenta began his career about 15 years later, Catholicism already was deeply entrenched in the ritualized world of lucha libre.

IV



Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee

Sergio Gutiérrez was born on February 5, 1945, in a remote little town in the state of Hidalgo called Cieneguillas, the seventeenth of eighteen brothers and sisters. Life there was poor and sad. Sergio's father was a *carbonero*. He made charcoal out of burned wood, then tied loads of it onto the back of a donkey or mule and traveled ten or eleven hours to the nearest city, Pachuca, to sell it.

When Sergio was a little boy, his father's family ran into trouble. His uncles were murdered in some kind of feud, so his parents packed the family up and left. They landed, eventually, in Mexico City, settling in a rough neighborhood on the north end called Tres Estrellas, in the shadow of the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe. By the time Sergio was nine years old, he had learned how to fight, joined a gang, and had started using drugs, beginning with marijuana.

"At first you smoked to see what it felt like, then pills here and there, then cocaine, and from there all of it..."

Sergio went to school. He worked a few odd jobs to get by: making pencils in a pencil factory, selling *paletas* at a circus. But mostly he fought and got high. He says he has nearly seventy scars from the various beatings of his youth. He has been stabbed and he has been shot. One time, a drunk hit him over the left eye with a bottle. His eyelid still droops because of it.

During those years, Mexico City was growing fast. The population, which has now climbed to more than 20 million, was still only about 5 million people, but families like Sergio's were arriving in waves, one after another. They filled slums like Tres Estrellas, looking for work in an industrializing economy. Sergio could have been a character in *Los Olvidados*, the Luis Buñuel film that tells the story of a group of impoverished street kids who are doomed by their circumstances to a life of violence and tragedy. Filmed in a barrio just like Tres Estrellas only a couple of years before his family arrived in the capital, the film could have predicted Sergio's fate.

V

When Sergio was about 20, one of his friends in the gang was murdered, and the police pegged him as the lead suspect. He didn't do it--he was getting drunk in a cantina when the murder occurred. But he had to prove that to the police, going back to the cantina and finding fellow drunks who could remember that he had actually been there. Not such an easy task for an addict who was perpetually high.

Around this time, Sergio entered a church in his neighborhood and went into the confessional. He said to the priest that he was a drug addict and he wanted to get help. The priest told him, "This isn't a rehab center." He came out of the confessional, grabbed Sergio by the ear, and tossed him back onto the street.

Standing outside the church, Sergio realized something. "If there were cool priests, '*de buena onda*,' a lot of us would change." So he decided then to become a cool priest. A *sacerdote chido*.

He went down to Tlalpan, a borough in the south of the city, far from Tres Estrellas, and entered a rehab facility. They strapped him to a bed and injected him with some kind of serum. They told him that, "Here you don't get cured; you get detoxed. Curing you have to do for yourself." Sergio spent almost a week alone in a small room, hallucinating and screaming in agony as the poisons sweated out of his body, afraid the whole time that the lightbulb hanging over his head was going to swallow him whole.

He came out determined not just to get clean, but to get cured. To do that he knew he would need to leave Tres Estrellas behind. "As a drug addict, you know where the drugs are. You know who has the drugs. It's like crap, like excrement. You smell it."

Sergio entered a seminary in Toluca, the capital of Mexico State. But he had not yet abandoned all his old habits. Within a week, he punched one of his fellow seminarians in the face. The Fathers threw him out on the spot.

"How are you going to break a wild colt from night to morning?" Padre Tormenta says now. And these days he looks downright tame: compact and frail, with a neatly parted haircut. When remembering something, his small eyes recede almost completely into his face. When he needs to scroll through the contacts on his cell phone, he looks at it through a magnifying glass he keeps in a drawer. But his gravelly Spanish belies the truth, that the wild colt was never completely broken. He doesn't swear in the full, vulgar sense of the word, but his speech is lively and peppered with street slang you don't expect to hear from a 69-year-old priest.

He tried again soon after, enrolling in a different seminary. This time, it stuck. They sent him to study in Europe: Barcelona, then Navarra, and finally Rome, "a different world entirely." He learned philosophy, theology, medicine, the psychology of juvenile delinquency. He came back to Mexico and the church sent him to Veracruz.



Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee

VI

That is the story as he told it to me. But that is not the only way Fray Tormenta has told it. In some versions, he played professional soccer for a year. Or the priest didn't throw him out, but encouraged him to go to seminary. Or, better yet, young Sergio wandered into a church while high on one drug or another and had a vision of himself as a priest, standing before the pews, and only then decided to get clean and join the clergy.

One popular legend about Fray Tormenta is that he received specific permission from the Vatican to be a luchador. This he denies. But in other interviews, he has mentioned that he received the blessing of Pope John Paul II.

"It was one of the times that Pope John Paul II visited," he told the Mexican journalist Antonio Esquivel Bernal. "They invited us to a meal, and during that visit he went around saying hello to everyone. When he came to me I introduced myself: 'I'm Father Sergio and also 'Fray Tormenta.' He smiled and said he wished there were many Fray Tormentas in the world. I answered, smiling, 'No

sir, because then all the churches would cease to exist.' He placed his hand on me and gave me his blessing."

He has recounted his life so many times that it's difficult to blame him for changing things up and massaging the facts on occasion; he is a performer, after all, and knows how to tell his story so that it most effectively reaches a particular audience. His life has become as allegorical as one of the Bible stories he might expound on in a sermon. Fray Tormenta is a character Padre Sergio plays, but he is also exactly who Padre Sergio is.

When the church phone rings, for example, he tells the person on the other end, "You are speaking to Padre Fray Tormenta." He does this even though it is clearly a wrong number.

"What happened is that without my intending it, Fray Tormenta has become a symbol," he says. "The luchador priest."

But of course he intended it.

VII

This is the story of the moment young Sergio Gutiérrez decided to take his final vows and become a priest, which is also the beginning of the story of how he became a luchador:

In Veracruz, Sergio found a home in the parish full of junkies, sex workers, and delinquents. He had some musical experience, and helped some of the parishioners form a band to play at churches and parties. The band was a moderate success, although a priest once stopped them from playing at a mass because one of the musicians, a teenager named Pinguino, reeked of marijuana. But that was all right. Marijuana was not so bad. At least Sergio was giving them structure.

Things were going well until one day Pinguino took too much of something. Sergio found him in bad shape, and loaded him into his car to take him to the hospital. Certain that this was the end, Pinguino asked Sergio to pull the car over and hear his confession. Sergio told him that he could not do such a thing. He was not ordained, so he was not allowed to hear confessions or read last rites.

"Hear my confession," Pinguino said. "We're not going to make it."

"I can't. Ask God for forgiveness," Sergio said.

"God will forgive you for hearing it."

Sergio pulled the car over. He held Pinguino's head. And here, in the telling of the story in the little office in the church, decorated with a few photos and magazine clippings and little else, Padre Tormenta hesitates. There is a long silence. His red and yellow mask rests folded on a side table. He is 40 years removed from the day in question. But he chokes up. The boy died right there in his arms.

Three days after the funeral, Sergio decided that he would take his formal vows. The priest asked if he wanted to be ordained into the cathedral in Veracruz, but Sergio said no. He wanted to be ordained in the run-down church.

"And the bishop ordained me a priest on May 26, 1973, at one in the afternoon among prostitutas, drogadictos, y delincuentes."

Soon after that, he began to take in orphans. First, one arrived, then another, then another. Within a year he was housing a dozen boys at the parish and wherever else he could, struggling to feed them. He was teaching them music, running two separate bands, when word came down that he had been transferred to another church, 150 miles away in Puebla. When he went to Puebla, the boys followed him.

Padre Sergio continued to care for the boys in Puebla until higher-ups asked him to give up the orphanage. He took the advice of a fellow priest: he left Puebla for a diocese that would accept his works. He found such a place in Texcoco, the quiet city in Mexico State where he still lives. He and the boys were welcome there, but the diocese would not take on any of the costs of the orphanage. Padre Sergio would have to figure that out for himself.

"And from there," he says, "arises Fray Tormenta."



Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee

VIII

They say there are no original stories, that since Biblical times, we've been telling the same ones over and over. Even the story of Fray Tormenta the wrestling priest--a story that itself inspired the Jack Black movie *Nacho Libre* and before that a lesser known French film starring Jean Reno called *The Man in the Golden Mask*--is borrowed. It is borrowed, as it turns out, from another movie: a low-budget Mexican film from 1963 called *El Señor Tormenta* about, as you might imagine, a priest who begins a secret lucha libre career in order to raise money for starving orphans in his care.

The movie was part of a tide of luchador films that swept Mexico from the 1950s through the 1970s. The country's most iconic wrestlers, El Santo and Blue Demon, gained their greatest fame as movie stars fighting zombies, aliens, and vampires. *El Señor Tormenta* was a minor wrestling film. It did feature a couple of big names, Black Shadow and Cavernario Galindo (he dressed as a caveman), but only in supporting parts. What makes the movie special is that it came true.

"I said to myself," Padre Tormenta recalls, "'I'm going to carry this thing out'." This was the tail end of the era of when wrestling stars in Mexico were also transcendent celebrities, pop culture icons on the level of actors and musicians. Huracán Ramírez and Mil Máscaras. Tinieblas and Rayo de Jalisco Sr. Padre Sergio took his name and his image from the movie. He had dollar signs in his eyes, but not for himself. "I thought that I was going to earn like Cassius Clay or Oscar de la Hoya," he says. His vision was of expanding, or at least sustaining, the orphanage.

For a year, Padre Sergio woke up at 4:30 every morning and traveled an hour each way from Texcoco to a gym in Mexico City where he learned the art of lucha libre. He had to be back by 8:00 to celebrate the mass. His earnings from his first fight were 200 pesos--at the time, about 10 American dollars. And so it went: he was not exactly making Cassius Clay or El Santo money, but he was not ready to give up yet either. He fought on small cards around Texcoco, and gradually built up a following.

All the while, he was re-entering a world of vice he had left behind long ago. Lucha libre might be a black and white morality tale in the ring, but behind the scenes, the sport is fertile ground for every kind of habit: drugs, sex, booze, all of it. Locker room talk is not exactly Sunday school material. "The luchadors' dressing room is generally mayhem," says a long-time wrestler named Atlantis. "There's a lot of swearing. But he got used to it."

Soon, Fray Tormenta was admitted into the Consejo Mundial de Lucha Libre, the sport's foremost promotion, which was founded by Salvador Lutteroth, the man who brought wrestling to Mexico in the first place.

IX

The bishop in Texcoco, however, was not impressed, and demanded that the Padre give up lucha libre, it was unbecoming. Padre Tormenta's arguments fell on deaf ears until, finally, he decided to put some of the showmanship he had learned in the ring to use: he decided to bluff. He told the bishop that he would happily give up lucha libre if the diocese would give his orphanage the money he was earning in the ring. The bishop, under the impression that he was making a fortune, relented. "Be careful," he said.

It's easy to see why a bishop might have objected, especially to the ease with which Fray Tormenta incorporated religious ritual and symbolism into lucha libre. It would be one thing for a layperson to perform as a wrestling priest character. It's altogether different when the man behind the mask, and inside the red and yellow spandex, is an actual priest. El Santo, after all, was not an actual Saint. Fray Tormenta had a finishing move called La Confesora: The Confessor, a submission hold that ended with his opponent lying face down, arms and legs yanked behind him, and screaming in agony for mercy. He was regularly pitted against opponents with names like El Satánico, El Hijo del Diablo, and Judas.

As easily as he brought religion into Lucha Libre, Fray Tormenta brought lucha libre into his work as a priest. He began to minister regularly to fellow luchadors. Sometimes reality and fiction blended, such as when he celebrated masses at the Arena Mexico, or gave his priestly blessing to Místico, a contemporary lucha libre superstar that Padre Tormenta had helped train. But mostly, Padre Tormenta's ministry was straightforward.

"They are two separate things," he says of his character and his real life clerical duties. "Would I ever play around with my ministry? No, no, no."

Padre Tormenta has baptized the children of wrestlers, spoken at the funerals of fallen brethren, blessed their houses, prayed for them as they entered the ring, and even officiated the wedding of Blue Demon Jr. Perhaps most importantly, he has served as their confessor.

"Fray Tormenta is our Father," says Brazo de Plata, a luchador who served as Fray Tormenta's tag-team partner. "He is our lucha libre priest. For me it's an honor, considering his age, to have wrestled alongside him."

X

With increasing notoriety came some financial gain. Fray Tormenta began to make some money appearing in the United States and Japan. In Japan, he says he developed a cult following because he resembled Tiger Mask, a 1960s manga character who wrestled to raise money for an orphanage.



Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee

The character had also been used by a number of Japanese wrestlers over the years, and would later become the backstory for King in the video game *Tekken*. "They thought Tiger Mask had been reincarnated in Fray Tormenta, and for that reason they followed me a lot," he says, remembering the Japanese crowds drunk on beer and sake and shouting for La Confesora.

Padre Sergio fell by the wayside as more and more of his parishioners began to call him Padre Tormenta, or simply El Fray. If his identity as a luchador was ever secret (accounts conflict), the secret was not kept long. With his wrestling earnings, he was able to buy an actual building to house some of the boys,known affectionately as his *cachorros*, or cubs.

He spent the 1980s pouring everything he had into the orphanage, continuing to live in poverty even as his profile grew. Yellow in his mask for liveliness inside, and now outside, of the ring. Red for the blood spilled. The boys would receive training in lucha libre and three square meals a day, as well as a chance to make something of themselves, even if not all of them would.

In 1991, *The Man in the Golden Mask* premiered, and Fray Tormenta got a chunk of cash for the rights to his life story. He used it to build a brick and mortar orphanage in his home state of Hidalgo, which has since burned down in a fire set accidentally by one of the boys. When *Nacho Libre* premiered in 2006, he did the same thing, but in Texcoco.

XI

"As long as I've been a priest, for 42 years, I've worn a rubber band," says Padre Tormenta, leaning over his desk. "Because the laws of the church should be like a rubber band."

He rolls up his sleeve--he is wearing pinstriped dress slacks and a red University of Oklahoma sweatshirt--and tugs at the rubber band dangling from his wrist, stretching it out and holding it taught.

"But if you pull too much, it breaks."

The wrestling priest, of course, is comfortable stretching rules. It comes with the territory of being a sacerdote chido--the kind of priest he set out to be fifty years ago when he was still just an addict street criminal. Most of the rules Padre Tormenta breaks are simple ones. Some priests have criticized him, for example, for singing mariachi songs in church. But he only does it after the liturgy, and besides, it makes the people happy.

"If Jesus Christ came down, he would sing just like me," he says.

Performance, after all, is an essential part of Padre Tormenta's identity. The priesthood. The wrestling career. The music. Now that his health has abandoned him, and he will no longer be able to earn money for his boys in the ring, the Padre will have to leverage these skills, and his fame, to

raise money however he can. Last year, he released a CD, *Fray Tormenta Sings for Everyone with Mariachi*.

After he makes sure I understand that lucha libre is as physically painful as one could imagine, even for a person who has been shot, stabbed, hit over the head with a beer bottle, and kicked a drug habit, he expands on the theme of performance: "It's circus. As much theater as it is sport."

Then he gets up from his desk to show me. He has me pin his arm behind his back, then he spins around and pins my arm behind my back in the same way, then has me follow his motion, returning us to our original position. We cycle back and forth a few times, building into a rhythm-the way two wrestlers might at the start of a match when they are just feeling each other out. Finally, when I am feeling good about my technique, pinning his arm back, preparing for the next step in the dance, the old priest screams in agony, begins convulsing, and slaps his leg with his free arm. Horrified, I jump backwards.

The old man laughs. He was faking it.

XII

Mid-way through the interview, Fray Tormenta asks if I want a tour of the church. We walk first through a windowless room beside his office, where a woman who helps out around the church and two of his cachorros are watching a dubbed version of the show *Cheaters* on an old television. Upstairs, he shows me two bedrooms, each cluttered wall to wall with bunk beds where some of his boys sleep. More than 2,000 have come through over nearly forty years, he says, including three doctors, sixteen teachers, nine lawyers, two accountants, twenty computer technicians, and one priest.

Beside one of the bedrooms is a kitchen overrun with flies. The refrigerator is mostly empty, and bags of rice are piled high on a shelf in a corner. Resting on the dining table and leaning up on the wall is a heavy framed painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe. It fell down from the wall the day before, one of the boys tells Padre Tormenta. Somebody will have to repair it soon. Across the room hangs another, nearly identical painting of the Virgin.



Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee Photo by Erin Lee

"I want you to know that I never sought fame out," Fray Tormenta had said a moment before in the office. "I sought out money, which never came. But from the little that God gave me, through people, many have been able to benefit."

The work, the boys, the cachorros, came before everything else.

"They always had bread in their mouths. There was always something. And me? Look at the luxuries I have. I don't have a single luxury. I was born into poverty."

The scene reminds me of something a rudo named Rey Bucanero told me the Friday before, while we stood in the concourse of the Arena México beneath a mural commemorating the recent 80th

anniversary of lucha libre in the country.

"Whether he's going to a mass, or going to wrestle, he carries the same suitcase. He simply changes the things inside."

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Teen hospitalized after air freshener causes car explosion

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press September 22, 2016

BERLIN (AP) — A German teenager has suffered serious injuries after accidentally creating an explosion in the family car with air freshener.

Police in the western city of Duisburg say the 17-year-old boy had been trying Wednesday to get rid of the smell of cigarette smoke in a recently purchased secondhand Volkswagen SUV.

They say the teen sprayed so much air freshener inside the vehicle that it turned into a "combustible gas mixture." The gas ignited when he opened the passenger door and a light switched on.

Police said in a statement Thursday that the force of the explosion blew out the vehicle's large glass sunroof.

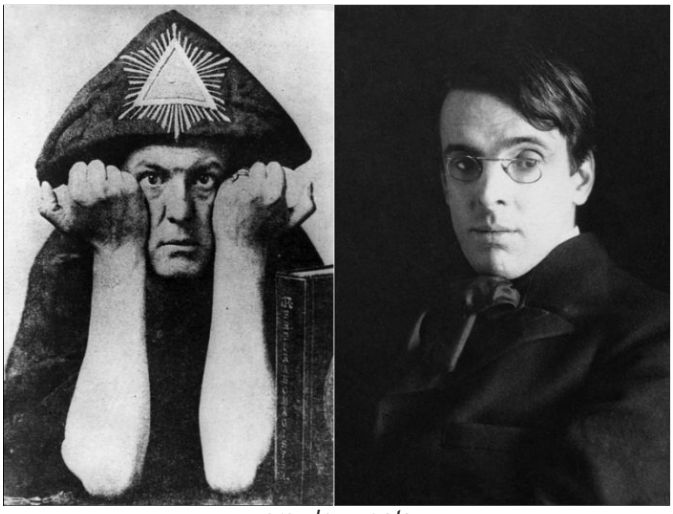
The unidentified teen was hospitalized with burns to both arms.

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Aleister Crowley & William Butler Yeats Get into an Occult Battle, Pitting White Magic Against Black Magic (1900)

in Poetry , Religion | October 10th, 2016 Leave a Comment

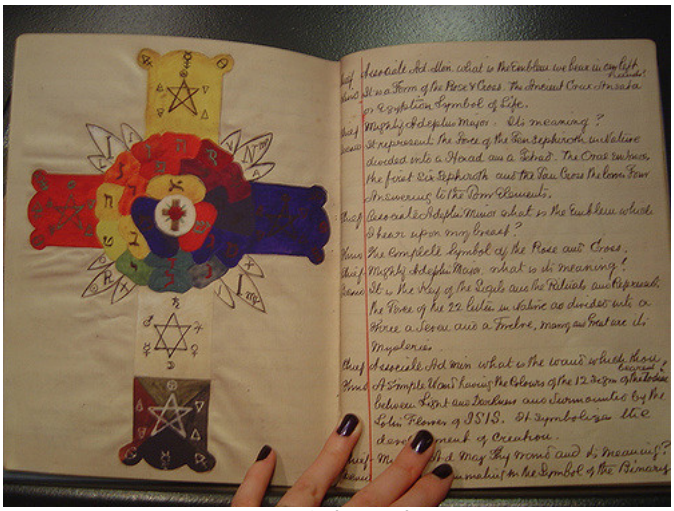
openculture.com



crowley-yeats

Aleister Crowley—English magician and founder of the religion of Thelema—has been admired as a powerful theorist and practitioner of what he called "Magick," and reviled as a spoiled, abusive buffoon. Falling somewhere between those two camps, we find the opinion of Crowley's bitter rival, the Irish poet William Butler Yeats, who once passionately wrote that the study of magic was "the most important pursuit of my life….. The mystical life is the center of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write."

Crowley would surely say the same, but his magic was of a much darker, more obsessive variety, and his success as a poet insignificant next to Yeats. "Crowley was jealous," argues the blog Rune Soup, "He was never able to speak the language of poetic symbol with the confidence of a native speaker in the way Yeats definitely could." In a 1948 *Partisan Review* essay, literary critic and Yeats biographer Richard Ellmann tells the story differently, drily reporting on the conflict as its participants saw it—as a genuine war between competing forms of practical magic.



yeats-journal

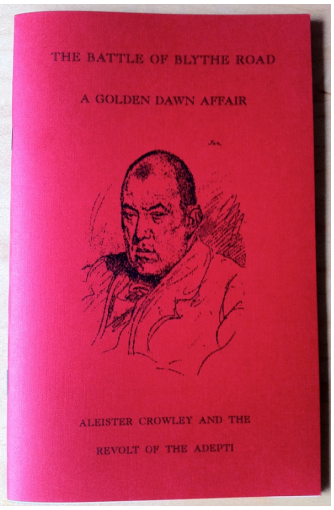
Having been ejected from the occult Theosophical society for his magical experiments, writes Jamie James at *Lapham's Quarterly*, Yeats joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, "an even more exotic cult, which claimed direct descent from the hermetic tradition of the Renaissance and into remote antiquity." At various times, the order included writers Arthur Machen and Bram Stoker, Yeats' beloved Irish revolutionary Maud Gonne, and famous magicians Arthur Edward Waite and Crowley. (Just above, see a page from Yeats' Golden Dawn journal. See several more here.)

"When Crowley showed a tendency to use his occult powers for evil rather than for good," Ellmann writes, "the adepts of the order, Yeats among them, decided not to allow him to be initiated into the inner circle; they feared that he would profane the mysteries and unleash powerful magic forces against humanity." Crowley's ouster lead to a confrontation in 1900 that might make you think—depending on your frame of reference—of the warring magicians on *South Park* or of Susanna Clark's *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*, or both. "Crowley refused to accept their decision," writes Ullmann, and after some astral attacks on Yeats,

> …. in Highlander's tartan, with a black Crusader's cross on his breast… Crowley arrived at the Golden Dawn temple in London. Making the sign of the pentacle inverted and shouting menaces at the adepts, Crowley climbed the stairs. But Yeats and two other white magicians came resolutely forward to meet him, ready to protect the holy place at

> any cost. When Crowley came within range the forces of good struck out with their feet and kicked him downstairs.

This almost slapstick vanquishing became known as "the Battle of Blythe Road" and has been immortalized in a publication of that very name, with accounts from Crowley, Yeats, and Golden Dawn adepts William Westcott, Florence Farr and others. But the war was not won, Ellmann notes, and Crowley went looking for converts—or victims—in London, while Yeats attempted to stop him with "the requisite spells and exorcisms." One such spell supposedly sent a vampire that "bit and tore at his flesh" as it lay beside Crowley all night. Despite Yeats' supernatural interventions, one of Crowley's targets, a young painter named Althea Gyles, was "finally forced to give way entirely to his baleful fascination."



kuntz-the-battle-of-blythe-road

Ellmann's both humorous and unsettling narrative shows us Crowley-as-predator, a characterization the wealthy Englishman had apparently earned, as "responsible governments excluded him from one country after another lest he bring to bear upon their inhabitants his hostile psychic ray." [Brenda Maddox at *The Guardian* gives a slightly different account of the Battle, in which "Yeats, with a bouncer, saw him off the premises, called in the police and ended up (victorious) in court."] Yeats and the other members' distaste for Crowley surely had something to do with his predatory behavior. But the rivalry was also indeed a poetic one, albeit extremely one-sided.

As Crowley biographer Lawrence Sutin writes, "the earnestness of the young Crowley could not compensate, in Yeats' mind, for the technical difficulties and rhetorical excesses of his verse." Yeats' opinion "infuriated Crowley," who indulged in the magic of projection, writing "What hurt him [Yeats] was the knowledge of his own incomparable inferiority." Crowley's remarks are both "ridiculous," Sutin comments, and apply "far more convincingly to Crowley himself." Nevertheless, Crowley's "Magick," continued to make Yeats uneasy, and he may have invoked Crowley in his famous line about the "rough beast" slouching toward Bethlehem in 1919's "The Second Coming."

While the magical battle between them might provoke more laughter than curiosity about their different brands of magic, Sutin notes a crucial difference that distinguishes the two men: "whereas Crowley placed himself in the services of the Antichrist 'the savage God' of the new cycle, Yeats's fidelity was to 'the old king,' to 'that unfashionable gyre.'" The gyre, so central an image in "The Second Coming," stands for Yeats' theory of time and history, and it belongs to an old mysticism and folklore that for him were synonymous with poetry.

Crowley viewed the occult as a source of personal power—his revelations filled books devoted to explaining the philosophy of Thelema ("Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will); " Yeats was certainly more of an "organization man… in his occult activities," writes Maddox, and sought to practice magic as a holistic activity, fully integrated into his social, political, and aesthetic life. His "public philosophy," as he called it, writes James, "propounds an extraordinarily convoluted system that aims to integrate the human personality with the cosmos."

To understand Crowley's magical thinking, we can probably skip his poetry and attempt as best we can to the decipher his several arcane, technical books full of invented terms and symbols.
To understand Yeats, as much as that's possible, we need to read his poetry, the purest expression of his mystical system and symbolic thought.

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Josh Jones is a writer and musician based in Durham, NC. Follow him at @jdmagness

by Josh Jones

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Watch family 'talk to dead relative through Amazon Firestick' on their TV

18:42, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 20:42, 1 Nov 2016 By Patrick Lion

mirror.co.uk



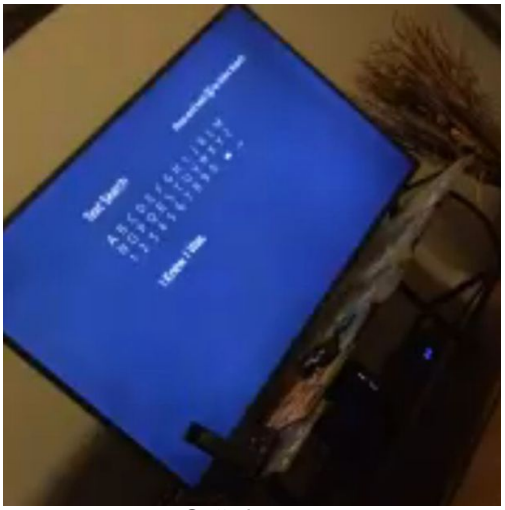
Family claim to talk to a dead family member - via the medium of Amazon Fire stick

A family claims they can talk to dead people through the Amazon Firestick application on their television.

A video clip shows a family watching a television screen as messages are purportedly spelt out using the on-screen keyboard by a dead family member.

The family members laugh and gasp as the messages continue to be typed on the screen.

"'Sure, tell (inaudible) I love him'," a woman in the living room reads out from the message on the screen at one point.



Getty Images

The words appear on the television screen as the family watch and read them out loud

The woman continues quoting from the screen: "'I knew I was his favourite cousin'."

The woman exclaims: "Oh my god!"

The typer then writes that they "miss you. I wish I had two lives."

Another female voice watching says: "Man this is crazy."

"Man, I'm about to cry soon."

The video has been watched more than 200,000 times.

The family says they were using an Amazon fire-stick

One commenter said: "All my firestick tells me is the batteries are dead."

Another commenter on the video said: "Could also be as logically (sic) as your I.P address has been hacked!

"If i was you i would take disconnect my devices and have them checked."

Another said: "If I was the ghost I would have wrote "I'm going to hunt your a** until the end of time j/k lol."

It was unclear where the video was shot but the family's accents sound American.



Getty Images

DailyMirror
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CREEPYLA

Amnesiacs, hoaxes, and homicide cover-ups at the La Brea Tar Pits



October 13, 2016

A few years ago, I was giving an out of town friend the nickel tour of Los Angeles, which always must include a visit to the La Brea Tar Pits. As visitors tend to do, he pointed out what I normally overlooked: the sheer volumes of "Missing Dog" leaflets affixed to the light and telephone poles along Wilshire Blvd.

"Missing dog," he'd read aloud, then, pointed to the park, then "Tar pits." He'd repeat this as we walked. "Missing dog, tar pits. Missing dog, tar pits." Mystery solved.

After all, what makes the La Brea Tar Pits a historical attraction isn't the persistent reek that emanates from it, or the bubbling black vat of the pool of asphalt – it's the secrets that have been uncovered within it, and for the morbid, what else may be within its depths.

Described as a "Death-Trap for the Ages," the tar pits has been a boon for archaeologists who have been able to excavated tens of thousands of bones of animals that fell prey to the muck. Covered in leaves and dirt, creatures such as mammoths, saber-toothed tigers and giant ground sloths would unknowingly venture over the pools of tar, and get stuck and starve, or slowly sink and drown.

As for humans falling in, the tar pits seems to want to keep some things secret.

The Amnesiac

In October 1935, 19 year-old Mary Alice Bernard told her mother, "some day you'll find me in the bottom of the La Brea pits," shortly before going missing. The LA Times front page covered the story with the headline, "BODY HUNTED IN TAR PITS," and reported on how the tar pits were raked with grappling hooks on long ropes without results.

After what must have been a grueling four months, her mother saw Mary Alice's photo in the paper once more, this time in a story about an amnesiac victim who was was being housed at a hospital in downtown LA. She believed her name was "Ann Page."

The next day she was reunited with her daughter.

The Liar

Another search at the Tar Pits was undertaken in December, 1938, when a suicide note and clothing belonging to George W. Page were found nearby. Police and firemen engaged in the efforts were surprised when Page himself showed up to say hello. He was arrested and sentenced to 30 days in jail for the hoax, which may have worked in his favor: he said he staged the suicide to get away from his girlfriend.

The Cover-Up

An oft mentioned urban legend is that the tar pits have also served as a convenient dumping ground for killers over the decades. But in fact, the only evidence of a human body ever having been dumped there is also the victim of L.A.'s oldest homicide, a fact that the operators of the museum and grounds have attempted to cover up.

Discovered in 1914, the bones of the since named "L.A. Woman" were determined to be at least 9000 years old. Her skull had a hole in it and broken jaw, believed to be from a crushing blow from a blunt object.

While the bones rested in a storage drawer, a cast of her remains were on display for decades until around 2004, when operators removed them without notice. According to several articles, there were fears that Native Americans would not only be offended by the display, but if they became aware of their existence they would demand the remains be seized to be ceremonially buried.

Alas, a recent search of the website for the La Brea Tar Pits & Museum finds no mention of the L.A. Woman, a surprising slight to someone who is indisputably the oldest know resident of Los Angeles.

The Weird

Surprisingly, this eerie, murky landmark seems remarkably free of any ghost stories.Then again, perhaps this isn't that surprising. What sort of ghost would want to spend the afterlife at tar pit?

(The closest I've found to a ghost story at the Tar Pits is a passage in "Haunted Southern California" about a family that reported seeing the reflection in the tar of a saber-toothed tiger hunting a bison.)

If there is anything supernaturally eerie about the La Brea Tar Pits, its that nearly forty years after two searches of the Tar Pits were made in vain, the grounds added a museum named after millionaire businessman George C. Page… no known relation to suicide faker George W. Page, or the name amnesiac Mary Alice Bernard came up with: Ann Page. Coincidence?

Conclusion

Those tar pits are deep, and just because the L.A. Woman is the only known body to have been found, it doesn't mean others *can't* be in there. Excavations in and around the pits continue to this day.



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Collinwood school fire: 100 years later, an angel still kneels over the children

By Rachel Dissell, The Plain Dealer | Follow on Twitter on March 02, 2008 at 4:08 AM, updated October 17, 2011 at 7:33 PM

cleveland.com

Fritz Hirter's day, his life, was like a fine-tuned timepiece.

Ever since he came to Collinwood from Switzerland and landed a job as custodian for Lake View School, the 46-year-old father of eight followed the same routine.

He would rise before dawn, put on his round, rimless glasses and neaten his handlebar mustache before heading down the block to the 2 -story brick schoolhouse that nearly 400 of the village's children attended.

Hirter's first task was to make sure the building was warm enough for the children.

By 6:30 a.m., after adding some coal to the furnace, he was sweeping the halls and cleaning the classrooms.

A little after 8, he would fling open the back doors, and the children playing in the grassy school yard, including four of his own, would flood into the school.

He did all those things on March 4, 1908.

It was Ash Wednesday.

Around 9:30 a.m., a little girl appeared in front of him.

"The basement is on fire!" she shouted, pointing to smoke curling from under the basement stairs.

-- Tonya Sams contributed to this story.

Order turns to chaos after alarm

At that moment, Hirter's steady tick went furious. He flew into a first-floor classroom to ring the fire alarm -- three taps on a gong. His five-year-old daughter Ella sat in the corner of the room.

"Hurry Ella. Go home," he told her. He ran to fling open the front and back entrances to make it easier for the children to get outside.

Air rushed though the doors, into the school.

It fed the already roaring fire.

Inside, the schoolteachers and children figured the alarm was a drill, since the weather was crisp, but clear and sunny.

Students lined up as practiced at their doors and headed toward designated exits.

Then they smelled smoke.

Katherine Weiler's second-grade class had been singing when they heard the bell and headed to the door of their second-floor classroom. Weiler was a strong young woman -- nearly 6 feet tall -- who taught arithmetic.

In her 20s, she was strict, possibly because she was brought up the daughter of a German Methodist minister.

She marched her 39 students down the rear stairway, commanding calmness.

A floor higher, another young teacher, Laura Bodey, coped with her panicking fifth-graders.

They saw the flames and screamed.

"Courage, children," she shouted as her lips turned white. "Everyone in line. You will be safe."

After finding both stairways blocked -- the front by flames and the rear by panicked students piling up -- Bodey led the kids back to the classroom. Some began to scatter and dodge past her. She grabbed them and threw them into the room.

"The fire escape," she cried. "Girls first." Those who listened made it out to stand with Bodey, her dress torn, her hair disheveled, on the lawn.

Some of the disoriented schoolchildren ran home. Others stood dazed and watched the horror.

Rescuers, parents rush to help

Also watching the inferno was Charles G. McIlrath, Collinwood's police chief. He descended from a proud pioneer family, among the first to settle the Western Reserve.

A generation earlier, his relative, Abner McIlrath, stood back to back with Abraham Lincoln during a reception during the president-elect's honor in Cleveland. McIlrath, to the audience's delight, was a half-inch taller.

Charles McIlrath, of the same solid stock, patrolled the village of 8,000 with his nightstick, often corralling citizens who drank a tad too much after a long day's work.

McIlrath was among the first to arrive at the burning building. He got a call about the fire and hopped into a passing wagon.

He knew that three of his children, Hugh, Benson and Viola May, could be inside.

But he didn't know if theirs were among the terror-stricken faces pressed against the school windows or among the little ones being carried away from the building.

Duty came first.

At the back door, fathers, mothers and passers-by struggled to pull out wailing children who tumbled over each other in a panic and were now wedged in a vestibule. Men -- many who dropped their tools and ran from the rail yard -- kicked and pounded at the solid wood doors with their fists until bloody.

One of the men was Fritz Hirter. He saved many students, tossing them out windows as he ran from the school, pulling them from the doorway. With his face and hands already singed, Hirter pulled at the tangle of arms and legs as more students tumbled uncontrollably onto the pile, which was nearly 6 feet high.

The children's moans mixed with the crackling of the fire.

Voices called out to men, "Papa, oh, Papa! Save me, save me!" But they couldn't untangle their little girls and boys and watched them wither in the fire. Flames until flames drove them away. Mothers, driven mad by the sounds of their children's screams, fought their way to the door.

One mother, who couldn't pull her daughter Jennie out, held her hands and talked to her.

"It's no use ma," Jennie said. "I've got to die."

As the fire crept up, she stroked her daughter's hair, burning her own hand to the bone before being dragged away.

When the village's horse-drawn fire wagon arrived; the building was already consumed. The firefighters didn't even have a ladder to reach the second floor. And the weak streams that came from their hoses merely produced steam that mixed with the smoke.

Soon the whole stairway, made of Georgia pine, disintegrated, sending the kids tumbling into the coal room.

In a little more than 20 minutes, all that stood of the smoldering school were the brick outer walls and a smokestack.

Rescue turns to recovery

That day, 172 children, two teachers and a rescuer perished. After the shrieks of the children died away, there was silence.

A gray-haired man dropped to his knees in the muddied schoolyard.

"Oh, God, what have we done to deserve this?" he moaned, his arms raised to the smoky sky.

Police Chief McIlrath had spent six hours containing the crowd of thousands who surged at the flaming building and later at its smoldering ruins.

McIlrath's son, Benson, 7, was among the first to escape from the building. And Benson's 9-year-old sister, Viola May, lost her hair to the fire but saved herself and three schoolmates from their second-floor classroom.

The oldest boy, Hugh, was missing.

Also lost in the fire was teacher Katherine Weiler.

At the stairway, even her commanding presence couldn't keep her students calm. They had begun leaping over the already-piling bodies in the rear stairway. Weiler hurled herself onto the pile, trying to grab the children and drag them back to the fire escapes.

"Quiet, children!" she had shouted. "Quiet. Go back to the fire escape."

They trampled her.

Dozens of ambulances ferried charred bodies to an empty storage area near the rail yards. The small bodies lost arms, legs and even heads during the short journey.

In the makeshift morgue, the children were placed 10 to a row by gender and covered with dark blankets. A railroad worker stood sentry at each row. Nurses were on hand to deal with parents who would no doubt swoon.

That evening parents were let in 10 at a time to look for their children. Most were unrecognizable. Some were curled next to siblings or friends.

Their trinkets often signaled identities: a gold ring, a silver watch or a suspender buckle.

One mother identified her daughter by a special pencil she carried, still in her hand. A 9-year-old recognized the plaid pattern of her older sister's skirt. A black-and-tan dog identified one child by curling up next to her body.

Chief McIlrath made his way to the bodies. After a nerve-wracking search, he identified his charred son by an L-shaped repair in the boy's pants. The boy's mother had mended them just the day before when he tore them while ice-skating.

"It's Hughie," is all McIlrath said, brushing back tears before heading back to the school, where he remained on duty far into the night. He later learned that his Hughie died a hero. He was last seen tossing students from the fire escape before heading back into the brick schoolhouse to rescue more.

Village overcome by grief

"HORRIBLE," the headline of the Collinwood Citizen read.

The Collinwood News called for calm.

"Collinwood is wrapt in sorrow; hearts are broke; families are destitute; a pall hangs over the village; we are dazed, humbled, abashed. . . . Fathers in your sorrow blame no one until guilt is proven."

That evening, the mayor of Collinwood called for saloons to close.

Volunteers were sent to check on mothers after several were found going insane with grief and trying to take their own lives.

White ribbons were placed on the doors of homes of children who perished. One street, Arcade Street, was adorned with 18.

A crowd gathered in front of Fritz Hirter's home.

His daughter Ella had made it home. But his three other children in the school were found huddled together on the second floor. Despite his loss many inconsolable parents blamed him.

Rumors flew: Hirter had left his post to have tea when the fire started. The doors to the school opened inward, trapping the children. Several girls had ignited the fire, making the tragedy an arson.

Community leaders vowed to fully investigate the fire and hold whoever caused it responsible.

But any reprisals would have to wait.

First, Collinwood had to bury its dead.

After all the parents had shuffled through the morgue, 19 bodies were still unidentified. The town ordered simple white coffins for them.

It was decided that the unclaimed children and 30 others, including teacher Grace Fiske, would be buried together, in a common grave. Other children were buried in cemeteries throughout the city.

Also never identified was teacher Katherine Weiler's body.

A body that was first thought to be hers was actually a rescuer.

Found in the rubble was a brown hair ribbon, a piece of tan skirt and a broken slate marked with the crooked chalk words, "I like to go to school . . ." The remains were believed to be Weiler's and were interred with the ashy remains of the children she desperately tried to save.

On March 6, at least four funerals were held every hour from sunrise to sunset. Services continued for days. There were so many to be buried that not enough funeral carriages were available. Undertakers' wagons and even streetcars carried the tiny coffins. The services for janitor Fritz Hirter's three children, Walter, 15, Helena, 13, and Eda, 8, were held at a small German church.

Beforehand, a crowd of 500 people had gathered in front of his home on Collamer Avenue, near the school. For days police and neighbors had been posted on the Hirters' porch with guns to warn away those wanting to hold the janitor responsible. Police accompanied his family on the procession. Hirter kept his eyes focused on the three caskets. Those who came in anger softened at the sight. All remained calm.

Fire survivors and students from Cleveland's schools served as somber pallbearers for their peers.

In Lake View Cemetery, on the day of the mass burial, large arches of flowers towered over the white caskets lined in the ground. Thousands showed up to mourn.

And now, 100 years later, an angel kneels over the gravesite, gathering the children under her bronze wings.

Epilogue: Janitor Fritz Hirter was cleared of any responsibility for the fire and worked as a janitor for the local schools until he retired at the age of 70. He lived until the age of 96 but seldom spoke about the fire.

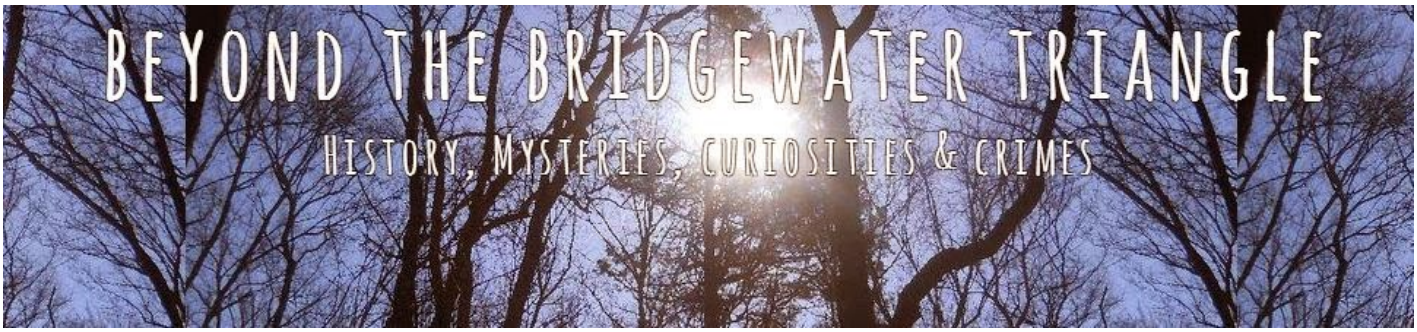
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Hey! Teacher! Leave Them Kids Alone: An Unusual Bridgewater Triangle Haunting

thebridgewatertriangle.com



Hey! Teacher! Leave Them Kids Alone: An Unusual Bridgewater Triangle Haunting



By Kristen Good

In January of 1886, a Middleboro School house temporarily closed its doors due to panic over a ghost. The ghost--believed to be that of a young boy who died from traumatic injuries after a "severe flogging"--had a reputation for helping children who were in danger of being punished by the teacher, even assisting the children in solving math problem by writing out the arithmetic in phantom writing mysteriously appearing on the chalkboard. But when Miss Nancy Butler--a young woman who lived a short distance from the school--claimed that the ghost chased her home from work one night, joining her as she passed by the small school house, the children's fear grew into an all out panic.

One local newspaper reported on January 28, 1886, "Miss Nancy Butler, a young woman living a short distance below the school house, tells her shop mates at the straw works that no longer ago than one week the ghost escorted her while passing down the road by the school house lat in the evening. She was frightened at the sight of the goblin, all in white, and ran, and the ghost pursued and "chased me home she declared excitedly. Many times the school bell has been rung in broad daylight when no one was in the hallway at the bell rope."

Middleboro area residents claimed to have seen a lamp glowing in the midnight hours in the school room, only to look in the windows and see a young boy diligently studying at his desk. "Stories are told of late passers by in the dead of night who have seen a light in the school room, and at intervals, the bell would ring out sharply--always one single stroke--that then the dim form of a boy dressed in white and carrying a lighted lamp would be seen to walk about the school room, and finally seating himself at ta desk, would place the lamp upon it and bend over as if in deep study." Witnesses claimed that daytime of appearances of the spirit boy would always be in particular spot of the in hallways, always with a a beam of light coming out of him. But at night, witnesses claimed described him as "traditional goblin, dressed in white and of extremely ghoulish appearance." "In the meantime numberless stories are told of the pranks of this spirit of a boy said to have died

soon after having received a severe flogging at the hands of a pedagogue. It is related, that on several occasions in a single night, or after the school had been closed for the Saturday holiday and over Sunday, when the school room was opened to the morning the black boards were found to be covered with elaborate designs in scroll work and lettering in a peculiar handwriting entirely different from anything seen on those board at any other time. Sometimes an example of in arithmetic that had puzzled some dull scholar to the verge of desperation would thus be found clearly demonstrated upon the board in the morning, and would be recognized by the scholar at once as intended for his or her befit and would doubtless prevent some punishment from being inflicted. In this way the ghost came to be recognized as a friend of the unfortunate but deserving scholar, who stood in the wrath of a teacher inclined to be unjust or severe."

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After departure, ex-'Razorback Nation' anchor apologizes for 'poor, poor judgement decision'

arkansasonline.com

Friday, October 21, 2016, 6:45 p.m.

By Emma Pettit

This article was originally published October 20, 2016 at 7:32 a.m. Updated today at 5:45 a.m.



aaron-peters-was-a-longtime-sports-anchor-on-multiple-tv-stations-across-the-state

PHOTO BY KNWA

Aaron Peters was a longtime sports anchor on multiple TV stations across the state.

Aaron Peters, the longtime "Razorback Nation" anchor on KNWA and KARK, announced his departure from the stations this week, saying in videos on social media that he mixed prescription medicine with alcohol before appearing on-air earlier this month.

Peters took to Facebook and Instagram on Tuesday, calling his actions a "poor, poor judgement decision."

"I do know that it was wrong. I did not know the full effect of mixing them," Peters said in a video posted to both social networks.

Peters said he was asked to step down after the incident, which was said to have occurred on Oct. 12.

He added that he regrets the decision and takes full responsibility, saying no one else should be blamed for his mistake. Peters thanked fans, colleagues and his family for supporting him through his 16-year career at four different stations.

"I want to say how sorry I am that I disappointed so many people. And that list starts with myself," Peters said.

Peters said he hopes to rebound from this error and "come back a better version of myself than I've ever been."

A video posted on YouTube shows the anchor slurring his speech during the broadcast.

You must login to make comments.

Displaying 1 - 6 of 6 total comments

oranh says... October 20, 2016 at 4:51 p.m.

A stand-up guy who I always thought did an excellent job for the viewers and ultimately his employers. In my observation he was always an excellent representative for the stations he worked for, both on-air and off. There was a time that people could forgive others, and even employees, for a lapse in judgment but in these days of living under the social media microscope supervisors seem much less likely to remember that we're all just human. Over the years I've known other anchors to attempt a newscast after tossing back a few. Not only were they not fired, at least one I know, got a promotion. That was then and this is now I guess. I hope this episode does truly prove to be a positive for Aaron's next chapter. He has earned it.

arkateacher54_aol.com says... October 20, 2016 at 7:32 p.m.

Guy owned his mistake and issued a classy apology. Hire him back.

HM2 says... October 20, 2016 at 7:44 p.m.

I remember when KARN was the best television station in Arkansas, now I don't think it's even in the running of the top five, Back in the day, Roy Mitchel, Tom Bonner and Ron Sherman carried the banner, Todays crew with the exception of Bob Clauson, are laughable, and some are a disgrace. What a shame.

PM1118 says... October 20, 2016 at 9:31 p.m.

Much too punitive! Might we show a little compassion here?

Nodmcm says... October 21, 2016 at 9:16 a.m.

Why can't we just ban alcohol, and make it the exact same penalty for possession as heroin? This guy would have been fine had it been a life-in-prison offense for possession of alcohol. Listen, our drug laws are working so well, why not add another chemical to the list? Think of all the misery and heartache banning alcohol would eliminate? Let's get this done, now!

TravisBickle says... October 21, 2016 at 10:59 a.m.

He liked the drugs but the drugs didn't like him.

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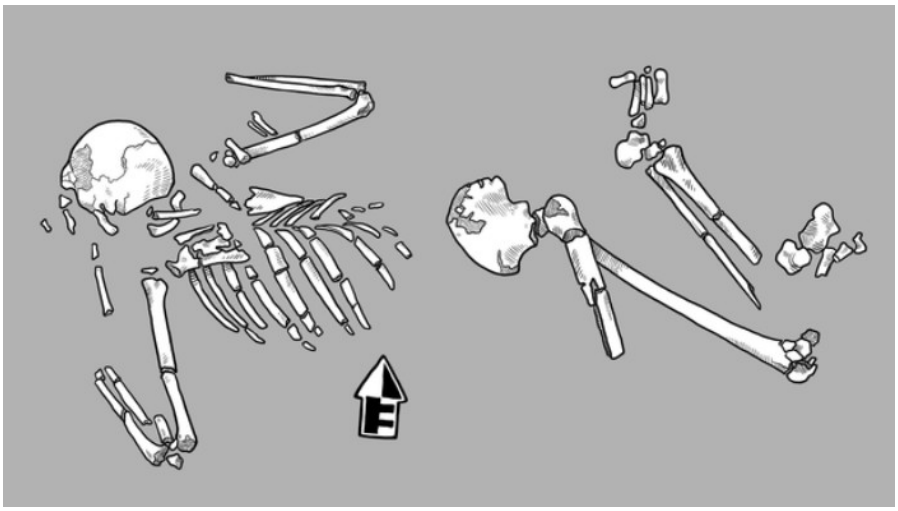
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Ancient Graves Suggest Revenge Killings Are Older Than We Thought

2016-11-01 11:00:00

vice.com



Bodies in graves. Image: University of Arizona

Written by

Meredith Rutland Bauer

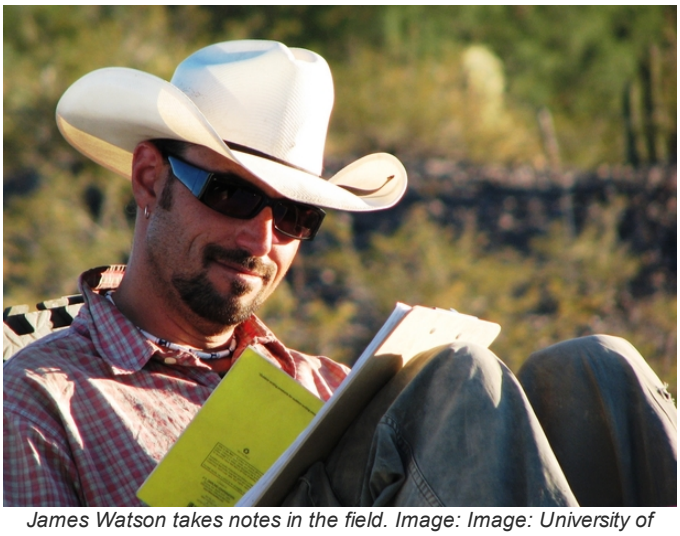
November 1, 2016 // 07:00 AM EST

The University of Arizona researchers noticed something strange about the ancient grave they were examining in the Sonoran Desert. The deceased had died brutally—but that wasn't the weird part. The body had been thrown in the grave haphazardly, as if the man meant nothing to the gravediggers.

The prehistoric clues led them to one conclusion with a surprisingly modern theme: Blood feuds.

Blood feuds were cycles of violence where families were pitted against other families and eventually established cultural divisions—like mob families or the Montagues and Capulets in "Romeo and Juliet". And in a recent study published in *Current Anthropology* this month, researchers think they found evidence of them at burial sites in Southwest US and northern Mexico from civilizations that lives between 2100 B.C. to 50 A.D.

The archaeological evidence could be early examples of revenge as a way to exhibit dominance, creating a cycle where families and societies fought each other through generations—much like today's gang violence.



James Watson takes notes in the field. Image: Image: University of Arizona Image: University of Arizona

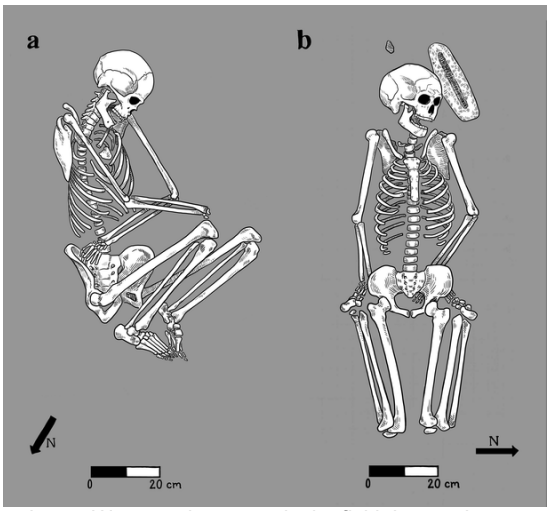
"With some of the issues that we're seeing today—like increased violence and murders in a lot of cities, police shootings, retaliation upon police—a lot of kids are growing up in a culture of violence in certain communities, and they're learning different values on how to interact with their environment because of the disadvantages that they have," said James Watson, a University of Arizona anthropology professor, in a statement.

"They gain status because they're good at being violent; that's how you gain respect, then along with that comes advantages—wealth, women and offspring, potentially. There is a biological imperative to signal that they are worthy of the status they're trying to earn."

The discovery of skeletons with broken skulls and punctured bones indicated they were killed violently, according to the study. And these bodies were discovered thrown head-first into graves or generally tossed into graves, which indicates no care was taken for a ritual burial.

This could suggest the denial of a traditional burial, which could indicate the person was hated by the individual burying them, the researchers said. That could signify a blood feud among families within a specific tribe since

these cultures would typically bury their dead in a flexed, fetal position on their sides with special items. These graves didn't have any items alongside the bones.



James Watson takes notes in the field. Image: Image: University of Arizona Image: University of Arizona

"These people were buried very differently than the rest of the community, and we're trying to understand why that is," Watson said. "We're arguing that the way they were tossed into these pits is a form of continued desecration of the body. It's moving from violence on the living individual, through to the process of death, to violence on the corpse."

The Arizona researchers think that denying the families the ability to bury their loved ones was a way to send a message about the deceased person's status in the society and the increased status of the person who killed him. But at the same time, such ill treatment of these bodies invited revenge from their families.

"This was right when agriculture came into the area, and these were the earliest villages, so we think that some of this violence comes from growing pains, as villages are established and people are claiming territory and farming the desert river valleys," Watson said. "Social tensions develop between communities, or even within communities, and end up boiling over into violence."

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Angry clowns confront store owner over 'racist' 'No Clowns Allowed' sign in London, Ont.

canoe.com



Oct 22, 2016

, Last Updated: 11:59 PM ET

You know things are going downhill when even clowns can't take a joke.

On the other hand, maybe only clowns know how serious a joke can be.

A small sign put up as a joke in the City Lights Bookshop in London, Ont. sparked a three-ring circus of two angry clowns, two frustrated bookstore employees, and two bicycle-riding police officers Thursday afternoon.

The sign: a clown face with a diagonal bar across it. In other words, No Clowns Allowed.

The sign has been in the store for years. With all the fuss over creepy clowns lately, store co-owner Teresa Tarasewicz said she put it up as a joke.

"We're a light-hearted place," she said. "We are the clowns inside this place."

Professional clown Buttons Blammo — Brian Currie in his non-clown life — didn't find it funny and vowed he wouldn't stand for it — even in his oversized shoes.

Accompanied by Lulu Pullitzor Palooza (Lori Ackerman in non-clown life), Blammo showed up at the store with a fat green marker and began writing on the store window.



(The sign in the window of City Lights Bookstore on Richmond Street in London (Derek Ruttan/Postmedia Network)

Tarasewicz came out, wiped it out and told him to stop.

"I asked your owner to take down this racist sign," Blammo said.

"It's not racist," the actual owner, Tarasewicz, said.

"It's offensive," Blammo insisted.

"It's a joke," Tarasewicz insisted back.

The creepy clown scare is ruining the business of professional clowns, Blammo told The London Free Press.

"This sign I see here is profiling . . . all clowns are the same, all clowns are fear clowns, all of us are scary clowns. That's not true."

Why can't anyone take a joke anymore? Tarasewicz asked after the confrontation, back inside the store.

"There's really not much to say except common sense has fled the building," she said.

Police managed to defuse the situation, for now at least. Blammo vows he will protest again. Tarasewicz says she won't be intimidated by a couple of clowns to take down the sign.

Asked to comment on the frustration of clowns these days, Clowns Canada president Empress Cherry Sunday, aka Stacey Laureyssens, would only send a statement released a few days ago.

"By standing tall, nose on and shoes shined, we in Clowns Canada can be a beacon — inspiring all to smile, share, lead with love and laughter and let this challenging, unfair spotlight we find ourselves in dissolve quickly," the statement said.

She later emailed to note that neither Currie nor Ackerman are members of Clowns Canada.

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The Most Appalling Zillow Listing of All Time Is Also a Distillation of the American Dream

slate.com

Brow Beat

Slate's Culture Blog
Oct. 18 2016 8:04 AM

The Most Appalling Zillow Listing of All Time Is Also a Distillation of the American Dream

By Osita Nwanevu



This is a kitchen. Or something.

Today, apropos of nothing in particular, I would like to share the story of an immigrant.

In 1994, Nikolay Synkov, a Russian naval engineer, came to the United States with his wife Tatiyana and their three children. Like countless others, he came to America seeking opportunity and prosperity. He found both by starting a small business—a home repair company that would indulge his unfulfilled passion for architecture.

It would also lead to the purchase of that timeless emblem of American middle-class success: a large, beautiful suburban home. In 2001, the Synkovs bought an 11-room house at 24 Brentwood Drive in the tony town of Avon, Connecticut. They promptly set about gutting it. For four years, Synkov would work 40-hour weeks leading a team of at least seven, including his children, in the fulfilment of a remarkable vision. This was no mere remodeling project. Synkov, who now describes himself as a self-trained artist working within the medium of the "single-family home", wanted the house to give voice to an idea. That idea, as explained in a 2008 profile in Connecticut's *Hartford* magazine, was "that peace is more honorable than the tragedy of war." By the end of Synkov's work, the house would be nearly double its original size and accompanied by well over 100 pages of accompanying documentation and poetry inspired by the paintings and writings of Wassily Kandinsky, the ideas of German philosopher Martin Heidegger, and Slavic migration, among other things.

The house has been listed on Zillow—where it is described as featuring "unique one of a kind finishing completed by a professional"—on and off since 2013. Synkov, it seems, is ready to move on. It is thanks to that listing, updated just last month, that the whole world can finally see what he has been up to.



"Battle from the XXI Century."

The Zillow page, which has 51 photos in total of the house and amounts to the first major exhibition of Synkov's work, has slowly been making its way around Reddit since its posting to r/diWHY, a subreddit dedicated to do-it-yourself mishaps. A few typical examples of the public response: "Jesus Christ, that house is like a bad time on acid." "Its like someone wanted to live in side of a house made of meat." "I imagine this is what hell looks like. The chocolate staircase looks evil." "That house is hands down the ugliest thing I have ever seen that was made on purpose."

The names of great artists unappreciated in their time could fill volumes—volumes that Synkov would perhaps use to wallpaper his master bedroom. What many such artists lacked was a public capable of understanding them and their works in context. With Synkov's work, the incurious eye might be put off, for instance, by the juxtaposition of floral patterning and what appear to be



"Main Sheet of Remembrance: There Was No Storm. It Turned into a Wind Blowing Some Bubbles."

human entrails affixed to the walls of the home's main living room. But this mild clash makes infinitely more sense when one learns the room is intended to represent the trials of Don Quixote. The staircase may indeed look like it had a viscous and fast-hardening mixture of dark chocolate and blood spilled down it recently, but its appearance is explicated, in verse, by an accompanying 41-line poem called "Main Sheet of Remembrance: There Was No Storm. It Turned into a Wind Blowing Some Bubbles," helpfully translated into English by Nikolay's daughter Yelena. "What should I remember/ What to remember," it begins. "Somersaulting everything flying at once/ How to forget, what to retell/ Or should everything going its course."



"Life and Description of Life of Don Quixote."

And what about Synkovs themselves? Would critics dismiss them so readily if they knew Nikolay and his wife drive a car with an inflatable Minion pirate and dragon attached to its roof as a trenchant critique of Russian president Vladimir Putin? Or that the house had also been home to an entirely different Synkov family project called the "SCHWIPAR Centre for Innovational Development Against the Balance of Interests," which, on a page topped by a photo of a warship, says it offers expertise and consulting for those in the shipbuilding, aerospace and heating, cooling, and refrigeration industries?

Sadly, none of the above has made enough of an impression on potential buyers to yield a sale. The house is currently listed at $339,000, down from a peak asking price of nearly $1.5 million. If the price drop and Muzak-soundtracked virtual tours don't work, it's conceivable that Nikolay's art will have to be destroyed to make the house "livable" by the usual standards of Avon, Connecticut.



"Life After the Last Judgment."

Nikolay is the founder of the Fermata Arts Foundation, an organization dedicated, it says in its mission statement, to aiding, through art, "in the preservation of peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation." The Fermata Arts Foundation has backed colorful youth art exhibitions here in the U.S., the U.K., Latvia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and, this past August, in Ukraine. The latter event even earned the writing of a welcome letter to participants from Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, who praised Fermata for making "meaningful progress in connecting the subjective experiences of Americans and individuals from post-Soviet states."

The organization's web presence is scattered and sketchy, but it can be gleaned that Fermata also hopes to back more artistic projects like the house at 24 Brentwood in the U.S. In fact, its webpage alludes to the existence of two more Synkov houses in Portland, Oregon, and Newton, Massachusetts, which are featured on a page at the site of Synkov's home repair service. "One of the most

important goals of these projects," Fermata's site says, "is the expression of the subjective reality of freedom in the United States, and how this becomes a multifaceted gift that actualizes itself in numerous ways for immigrants to the United States."

Twenty-two years ago, one such immigrant arrived speaking two languages most here wouldn't understand—one literal, one visual. He came to create, and he did, like so many enterprising immigrants before him, with the help of a loving family. Take a good long look at this home. You are staring at a vision of the American dream—wild, dissonant, radically different, radically free, and shaped wholly by its makers. Surrounded as we are by immense ugliness—figures that would have us tilt at windmills seeking enemies among those who come here with hope in their hearts—24 Brentwood can only be seen as beautiful.

Osita Nwanevu is a ***Slate*** editorial assistant.

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Archaeologists Have Uncovered a 'Cursed' Well in England

sciencealert.com

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Jamie Quartermaine
Archaeologists have uncovered a 'cursed' well in England

The stuff of legends.

JOSH HRALA
4 NOV 2016

Archaeologists in the UK have uncovered a small well that was traditionally used by religious pilgrims, who believed it could wash away their sins and cure various ailments such as poor eyesight.

The team thinks that the well – which is more like a shallow spring used for bathing – was built to honour Saint Anne, the supposed mother of the Virgin Mary, who had a cult following in Britain during the late Medieval Period (1066-1485 AD). And according to folklore, that well was cursed.

Researchers from the Historic England Heritage have named the religious site St. Anne's Well, and it was found buried on a piece of privately owned land near Liverpool.

Local archaeologists and the owner of the property were aware of the well for some time, but until now, no one had excavated it, and it had only been identified by photographs taken in 1983.

Now that it's original structure has been uncovered, researchers have been given new insight into when and how the well was used.

"When we first got to the well we found that there was very little indication of it on the surface, but after excavation, it was found to be in reasonable condition," the team's supervising archaeologist, Jamie Quartermaine, told Rossella Lorenzi at Seeker.

"This well was probably a late Medieval foundation as the cult of St. Anne did not become widespread in England until after the end of the 14th century."

During the time it was constructed, healing wells were all the rage in Britain, and St. Anne was commonly attributed to them – though many other healing wells were built in honour of other saints, too.

This well in particular would have seen pilgrims stepping into a pool of spring water roughly 1.2 metres (4 feet) deep, where they could wash away sins or attempt to be healed through divine powers.

The well was thought to be maintained by a priory of 12 local monks that were so successful, they even managed to turn a profit from the land, and the well grew so popular that two of the monks became full-time caretakers of it.

"The well attracted numbers of pilgrims, necessitating the building of a small three-roomed structure around the well and the custodianship of two of the monks," Quartermaine told Seeker.

The well's popularity wasn't the only thing that made it stand out – legend says it was 'cursed' sometime during the 16th century.

According to a newspaper report from 1877, the story goes that a neighbouring landowner by the name of Hugh Darcy was upset with the amount of space the well was taking up, prompting a dispute with Father Delwaney, one of the monks who helped run the monastery.

The feud reached a tipping point when the two were arguing near the well, and Darcy told the monk that he wouldn't be in business for much longer.

A few days later, a messenger from the king at the time – most likely Henry VIII, who had a thing for closing monasteries – came to close the facility and well, and an upset Father Delwaney promptly cursed Darcy and told him he would be dead in under a year.

Moments after the curse was muttered, the legend states that Delwaney fell over dead.

To be clear, this story is based on nothing more than hearsay, that has probably been exaggerated more and more with each telling.

But according to the folklore, a series of unfortunate events followed Darcy around for the next year – such as his son dying mysteriously, and his finances taking a turn for the worst.

Finally, after a night of drinking, Darcy was found at the well with his head smashed in, and no one knows how he managed to suffer such a fate.

Again, it's just a legend, but it's a good one.

The researchers suspect that religious pilgrims continued bathing in the well's waters up until the 19th century, until it was eventually abandoned and ploughed over.

Now that it's been unearthed, the team plans on adding some wood around the water to ensure that it doesn't get covered up again or damaged, and will be working with local farmers to ensure the site is maintained.

The team's work has yet to appear in a peer-reviewed journal for verification, so for now, we're taking their word for it that this is the well of St. Anne from the stories.

But hopefully, after further analysis, the researchers will share the details of their work with the public and the rest of the scientific community.

And if all goes well with the excavation, one of the most long-lasting holy wells in the UK will be revived, and fingers crossed it's curse-free.

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40 frozen dead cats found inside storage unit in Long Island City

Eyewitness News
LONG ISLAND CITY, Queens (WABC) --

abc7ny.com

Diana Rocco reporting live

Tuesday, October 18, 2016 08:39AM

A man who purchased storage unit Monday afternoon in Long Island City made a gruesome discovery, at least 40 dead cats inside two freezers.

The auction was held by American Self-Storage Facility for abandon storage lockers.

The auction winner, who paid $150, went to review the locker and found dead frozen felines.

During investigation, police found at least 40 frozen cats, including one skinned cat in an aluminum tray.

The cats were inside two four by three feet freezers. Police said the animals were stacked on top of each other and frozen together. They couldn't even count exactly how many there were.

Detectives said once they opened the freezers, it was the smell of death. They had to change their clothes it was so bad.

The ASPCA took the deceased animals for necropsies. They say that the procedures will take a few days to complete because they have to wait for cats thaw out.

Authorities need to wait for the necropsy results to determine if there will be charges.

The unit was rented out two years ago by a 66-year-old woman paying month-to-month who stopped paying in July.

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A Nederland marshal murdered a man's friend in 1971. Two weeks ago, the man allegedly planted a bomb to avenge the death. denverpost.com

A Nederland marshal murdered a man's friend in 1971. Two weeks ago, the man allegedly planted a bomb to avenge the death.

By Kirk Mitchell | kmitchell@denverpost.com
PUBLISHED: October 24, 2016 at 12:01 am | UPDATED: October 24, 2016 at 1:44 pm

An old STP sticker, the memory of a cap-gun-toting hippie, a rogue marshal and a 45-year-old grudge all came together earlier this month in a bizarre event that shook the small mountain town of Nederland.

Forty-five years after former Nederland Marshal Renner Forbes killed Guy "Deputy Dawg" Gaughnor, who he considered a nuisance, and then dumped his body near a gold mine shaft, the victim's friend is accused of seeking vengeance by trying to blow up the Nederland police station, sources familiar with the investigation say.

They say that on Oct. 11, David Ansberry, 64, left a backpack containing an improvised explosive device in a village shopping center where the small police station sits beneath a massage and acupuncture parlor.

They say he allegedly tried — using a prepaid cellphone — but failed 11 times to set off the bomb in an event that would have killed bystanders who likely knew nothing about the 1971 execution of his 19-year-old buddy, Gaughnor.

By then, Forbes had been in his grave for 15 years.

Ansberry, of San Rafael, Calif., now faces a federal charge of attempted malicious destruction of a business following his arrest in Chicago days after the bombing attempt. A source said that state and federal investigators are "100 percent" certain that Ansberry planted the bomb to avenge Deputy Dawg's death. The official spoke in confidence because they were not authorized to release the information.



Nederland resident Richard "Rick" Bertschinger, right, talks about members of the STP family from the 1970's as he smokes a cigarette outside of Pioneer Inn in Nederland on October 20, 2016 in Nederland, Colorado. The Nederland Marshal's office is helping the

An STP oil sticker with a note scrawled on it and stuck to the front window of The Laundry Room, a laundromat about 20 feet to the right of the police station, was a telling clue, the source said.

When asked last week about the sticker and its significance, Boulder County Undersheriff Kirk Long shook his head in disgust.

Unwelcome newcomers

The STP sticker was the adopted symbol of an edgy, hygienically challenged group of hippies called the STP Family, who migrated in Volkswagen vans painted with flowers from

FBI to continue its investigation of the recent bomb that was discovered outside of their offices . David Michael Ansberry, 64, the California man suspected of leaving the homemade explosive outside the police station, was associated with the STP family. One of the law enforcement officials said the device was designed to be remotely detonated using a cellphone but failed.

New York City and San Francisco. The newcomers, reviled by miners living at the time in the Rockies, invaded the mountain town 16 miles west of Boulder in the late 1960s and early 1970s during an era of anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, “free love” lasciviousness and unfettered use of hallucinogenic drugs.

“They were openly defiant, argumentative and intentionally antagonistic,” Long said. “They would panhandle aggressively and steal. They were constantly in trouble. They had lice. When we arrested them, jail deputies would hose them down.”

Some say the STP Family name originated from a potent hallucinogenic drug they preferred called STP. Others say it was related to the zodiac signs of the group’s three founders: Sagittarius, Taurus and Pisces. Not so, said Long, who arrested Gaughnor and scores of STP members in Boulder County in the early 1970s. Members told Long the acronym really stood for Serenity, Tranquility and Peace.

“This bombing really brought back memories,” said a bearded, long-haired Richard “Rick” Bertschinger, 67, a retired construction worker who lives in a motor home with friends.

Thursday morning, Bertschinger was sitting on a stool at the Pioneer Inn, a bar that once featured rock-and-roll upstarts like future legend Dan Fogelberg, who was staying at the nearby Caribou Ranch. Bertschinger drank coffee as he reminisced.

“I arrived during the Summer of Love in 1967. There was a lot of peace and free love. It was a great time,” the self-described hippie said. But he didn’t particularly like the STPs. “They were a cult. They gave us hippies a bad name. I thought about throwing a few of them down a mine shaft myself.”

Bertschinger said he would come across their makeshift encampments with tepees constructed with tarps, blankets and sticks in the mountains near Ruby Gulch. He once saw Ansberry, who stands 3-feet-6 and was known by fellow STPs as “Midget Jesse,” panhandling in town. He wore torn clothing and was filthy.

“I didn’t give him any spare change and he was angry and belligerent,” he said.

John Callahan, 70, who now operates the “Carousel of Happiness” in the same shopping center as the police station, said people in Nederland were afraid of the STPs in the early 1970s.



“They called themselves the STP Family. That was very close to the Manson Family,” Callahan said, referring to a communal hippie group led by Charles Manson, who was found guilty of killing seven people including actress Sharon Tate in the summer of 1969. “Many of the STP Family members carried machetes on their belts. The machetes looked heavier than they were. They were emaciated.”

Vigilantes made threats and then carried them out, raiding an STP camp and ripping their

tents apart, Denver Post reporters wrote in the early 1970s.

In early 1971, the Nederland City Council hired Forbes, an Air Force pilot who flew an F-86 during the Korean War, as the town marshal. He had a face and temperament like a bulldog, Long said. After a military career in which airmen were well-groomed and disciplined, the disorder caused by drunken miners and lawless hippies tested Forbes' patience, Long said.

"He was the kind of guy who could clean up the town," said George Epp, former Boulder County sheriff from 1991 to 2003, who was a deputy and shared a Nederland apartment with Long in the early 1970s.

Multiple arrests

Epp said there was one STP member who was particularly troublesome — Guy Gaughnor. He was a 19-year-old who wore a kid's gun belt holstered with a cap gun. Epp said he took his nickname from a 1960s cartoon character, "Deputy Dawg."

Long said he arrested Gaughnor several times for stealing and disruptive behavior. But whenever Forbes, who was the only one in the marshal's office, had to deal with Gaughnor, he'd have to take him down to Boulder to process him, Epps said. It was a chaotic time and Forbes was run ragged.

On the night of July 17, 1971, Gaughnor was causing a ruckus at the Pioneer Inn.

"He was abusive, antagonistic and hostile. Police work is done at the bad-breath and body-odor distance from criminals," Undersheriff Long said of Gaughnor's attitude. "Forbes had a military mind-set. He was direct and sometimes confrontational. One man can only take so much."

Forbes put Gaughnor in his gold 1969 Plymouth and drove away. It was the last time anyone in Nederland ever saw Gaughnor alive.

About a month later, hunters discovered Gaughnor's skull near abandoned gold mines just off Oh My God Road, which is 25 miles from Nederland in northeastern Clear Creek County. Long was assigned to investigate the case. The head had only pieces of skin and long strands of hairs. Animals had likely scavenged the body and carried pieces deep in the woods, Long said.

"Even though we only had his head, I had no problem identifying him," Long said. "He had a distinctive look. He had a missing tooth and one tooth overlapped another one."

When Long interviewed Forbes twice in the following weeks, Forbes admitted that he had driven Gaughnor to his tepee, but that was the last he saw him. Despite abundant circumstantial evidence, there were no eyewitnesses to the murder and no physical evidence.

Colorado Bureau of Investigation forensic experts couldn't match a bullet taken from Gaughnor's skull to a .22-caliber pistol he found in Forbes' house because the slug was too damaged, Long said. It was a thorough, lengthy investigation aimed at Forbes.

"It really didn't matter that he was Deputy Dawg, the local miscreant," Long said. "A murder is a murder and you work them all the same."

Epp said Long was afraid that Forbes might shoot them because of the investigation.



On the last page of his report, Long wrote: “This crime will be solved when Renner Forbes confesses.”

Forbes confesses

Epp recalls the day in 1997 that former Capt. Bill McCaa walked into his office and said, “Hey, George, does the name Renner Forbes ring a bell?”

McCaa had just seen Forbes’ name on the door of a nursing home he was checking out for a relative. Forbes had been living in Kansas and Florida, but had moved back to Colorado. Epp ordered a new investigation.

At first, Forbes, who had severe medical issues including major coronary disease, denied killing Gaughnor during an interview in the nursing home. Sheriff’s investigators drove him to Ruby Gulch, where Forbes claimed he had left Gaughnor 26 years earlier. When Forbes got out of the car, he immediately vomited, Long said.

Forbes soon confessed to shooting Gaughnor and was charged with second-degree murder. Forbes spent a week in jail, which officials resisted because of Forbes’ extremely poor health, Epp said.

“He escaped justice for 26 years, and I thought he should see the inside of a jail despite the complaints of the jailers,” he said.

The charge was reduced to manslaughter and he was sentenced to probation, Epp said. Forbes died three years later.

Another 20 years go by. At 6:17 p.m. on Oct. 3, a little person walked into Dan Harrow’s laundromat just as he was closing the store for the day. Harrow answered the man’s questions patiently about laundry hours and cost of machines even though he was eager to get home and see Monday Night Football.

Harrow said his daughter is also a little person and it’s rare to see little people in Nederland. He noticed that the man was staring at his surveillance cameras.

“He didn’t give me any red flags,” Harrow said. “In hindsight, it’s easy to see what was going on.”

Eight days later, Harrow arrived for work around 8 a.m. and saw an STP oil sticker on his shiny front window. Harrow washes the window every day and his store is immaculate. He immediately peeled it off. On the back of the sticker was a note.

The sticker appeared to be decades old, Harrow said. On the back of the note was writing that blamed a marshal for a murder in the early 1970s. The note also said: “Rest In Peace Deputy Dawg July 17, 1971,” a source said.

That same morning, a Nederland police officer picked up a backpack from the parking lot in front of the station and carried it inside. When he opened the bag, he saw the IED and took the backpack

outside. The shopping center was evacuated. Local, county, state and federal law enforcement swarmed the shopping center and began a nationwide manhunt.

After the incident, Harrow recalled the odd sticker he had found that morning and gave it to investigators. The sticker had been left in a corner of the window, out of the range of his surveillance camera.

FBI agents traced the cellphone used as the trigger mechanism to a Black Hawk cellular phone company and then to a King Soopers store. They reviewed video tapes of the King Soopers and identified a small person as the buyer of the cellphone, court records say.

When federal agents arrested Ansberry in Chicago, he had the same STP stickers in his possession that were found on Harrow's window, a source says. Ansberry also admitted that Deputy Dawg had been a close friend in the early 1970s, the source said.

In the early-morning hours of Oct. 17, FBI agents gave Harrow another visit. They showed him a picture of a man and asked him if he recognized the person. When Harrow realized it was a small person, he looked closer and recognized the man who had visited him within the past 10 days.

By 2:30 a.m., he was reviewing his surveillance tapes with the FBI agents and found the video of Ansberry as he stared directly at the camera and spoke with Harrow. FBI agents measured how high the sticker was on the window. It was 44 inches off the ground.

"Low enough for a little person to reach," Harrow said.

Kirk Mitchell

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Attorney drops lawsuit over choking on Popeyes chicken

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 3, 2016

GULFPORT, Miss. (AP) — A Mississippi attorney has dropped his lawsuit against Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen after he says he choked on a piece of chicken when the fast-food restaurant failed to provide him a knife in the drive-thru.

Paul Newton Jr. of Gulfport tells The Sun Herald (http://bit.ly/2eZTmci) Thursday that he decided not to pursue the matter further citing "extreme comments" directed at his family.

Newton said the only utensil he was given last November at the Gulfport restaurant was a spork. The lawsuit said that because Newton didn't receive a plastic knife, his only option was to hold the piece of chicken with his hands and tear off pieces with his teeth, causing him to choke.

The lawsuit said Newton underwent emergency surgery to remove the piece of chicken from his throat.

"I continue to believe that the facts demonstrate an unsafe condition to the public that could easily be solved by the responsible parties at very little cost," Newton said in a statement sent to the newspaper. "I am hopeful that my filing of the court proceeding results in such remedial actions. However, due to extreme comments directed to me and my family, I have determined not to pursue this matter further."

Along with knives for all drive-thru customers' orders, Newton also sought financial compensation and punitive damages from several defendants

Renee Kopkowski, Popeyes' vice president of Brand Communications, said in an email that the company doesn't comment on ongoing litigation.

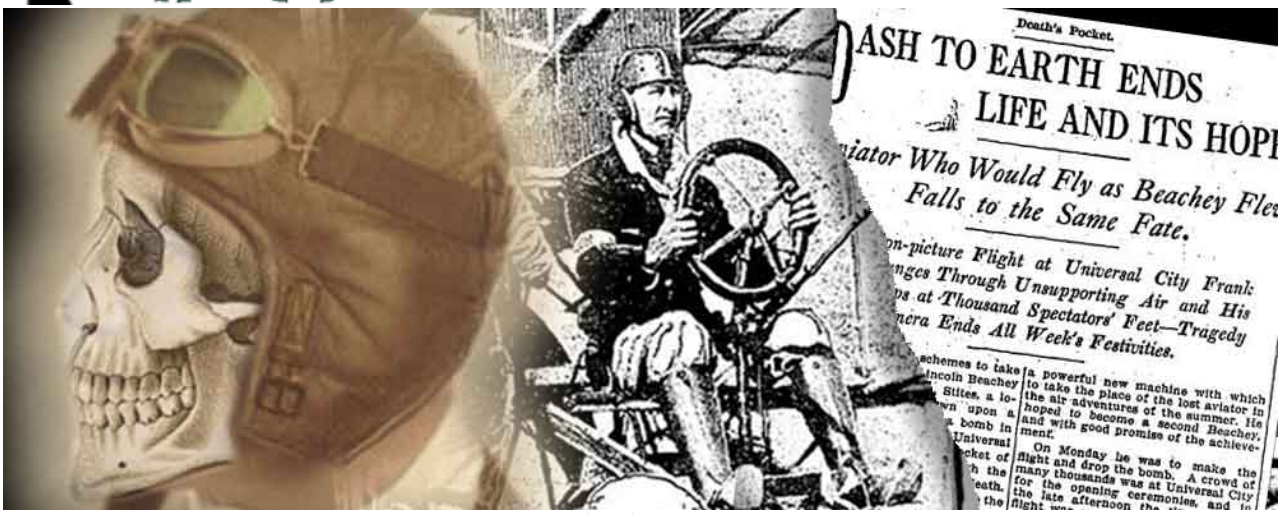
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The Doomed Aviator Haunting the Universal Studios Backlot

October 7,



stitesghoststory

2016admin

You may be surprised to know that the man behind one of L.A.'s premiere Halloween attractions can be frightened by something as benign as giggling, but as you're about to read, it was for very good reason.

In later summer 2015, longtime Universal Studios employee John Murdy was tasked with bringing back Halloween Horror Nights to Hollywood after a five year hiatus. As the creative director responsible for the grand vision of the attraction, Murdy was scouting the backlot for areas that could be included as part of the "Terror Tram" experience. Accompanying him was a member of his team, Casey.

"It was long after dark," Murdy recalled, noting that as far as he knew, he and Casey were the only people anywhere near that portion of the backlot. Which is why it surprised him when, he said, "I heard this diabolical giggling," which stopped almost as quick as it began.

With that, Murdy said, "I bolted," leaving Casey behind.

Casey cajoled Murdy to come back and investigate whatever it was that could have made the sound. Murdy sheepishly returned to Casey's side.

The disembodied giggling started again. This time, it was much closer. When he bolted again, Casey was on Murdy's tail.

By the next day, the story about Murdy and Casey encountering a "ghost" in the backlot was making the rounds among fellow Horror Nights and Universal staff. The more reasonable passed it off as a passing security guard. Most laughed at the notion that Murdy, a lifelong horror fan who began building home haunts as a small child, could actually be frightened. But not everyone dismissed the the possibility that the giggling was of supernatural origin.

Other employees began confiding of their own unusual experiences on the Universal backlot. One that stuck out to Murdy was the sighting of a man wandering the area near the "Psycho" house wearing a vintage aerial outfit, complete with a leather helmet and jacket. According to what he heard, a number of employees reported seeing a similarly dressed man over a period of years. What made this significant: the sightings were in the same area where Murdy and Casey heard the giggling.

Murdy dived into the Universal archives, searching for any films that may have had castmembers as pilots – considering Lon Chaney's ghost has long been seen wearing his costume on the soundstage where "Phantom of the Opera" was shot, it was possible the ghost of the aviator was of an actor refusing to let go of a former role.

After hours of research that led him, Murdy came onto the answer: A Los Angeles Times article from March 17, 1915, the opening weekend of Universal Studios. The headline:



Death's Pocket.

DASH TO EARTH ENDS LIFE AND ITS HOPE.

Aviator Who Would Fly as Beachey Flew Falls to the Same Fate.

In Motion-picture Flight at Universal City Frank Stites Plunges Through Unsupporting Air and His Body Drops at Thousand Spectators' Feet—Tragedy Before Camera Ends All Week's Festivities.

Frank Stites lies still in this photo taken moments after his tragic fall. Photo from "The Ghost of Frank Stites" Facebook page.

Could this have been the spirit that Murdy and other employees have encountered? Whether or not this was the source of the ghost story, the true story is chilling.

To celebrate the opening weekend of Universal City, studio chief Carl Laemmle orchestrated a spectacle to kick off what the Times hailed as "the greatest motion picture city in the world." Thousands of guests decended up Universal, many of whom had traveled to from across the country.

As they walked through the studio gates, gorgeous young ingenues showered flowers on the guests, while mounted cowboys and Indians fired shots into the air and whooped war cries. A who's who of the studio's directors, cast, and crew, demonstrated film shoots on a variety of film sets, and for the first time, the famous simulated "flood scene" had hundreds of thousands of gallons of water wash through the backlot.

According to the Los Angeles Times, on the first day of the momentous weekend, "only one or two minor accidents occured," and those were from children who received minor injuries after running under the horses.

The next day, the planned show stopper would be a simulated aerial battle above the heads of the crowd.

Universal had enlisted Frank Stites, a pilot whose own high flying bravado was already known to newspaper reading Angelenos. Stites regularly performed aerial stunts in Venice Beach and other coastal communities. Stites was also the chief instructor of the Griffith Aviator Park, which had opened three years earlier.

For the stunt, Stites would fly his biplane over an enemy plane and drop a payload of explosives that would destroy his enemy. The "bomb" was, in fact, an inert bundle of cloth, and the unpiloted enemy plane, strung along a zipline, was loaded with a primed explosive.

The scheduled battle was postponed throughout the day due to uncooperative winds, and perhaps, due to an extra cautious Frank Stites. That morning, Stites learned that his friend, the leading aviator Lincoln Beachey was killed while performing a stunt in the San Franciso Bay. The Los Angeles Times speculated that Stites faced with the challenge of taking Beachey's place as "The Worlds Greatest Aviator."

Everything went according to script, until the explosives went off. Before dropping the payload, Stites circled three or four times above the thousands of awestruck Universal visitors for effect. Spotting his cue from the director, Stites cruised back around on his path towards the dummy plane, and as scripted, dropped the payload, and the dummy plane was blasted into shrapnel. This was also when everything went horribly wrong.

To those on the ground, it appeared that immediately after the unmanned plane exploded, Stites lost control of the plane.

It is not known if he was tossed from his seat, or if he jumped hoping for safety, but when the plane was sixty feet from the ground, Stites plummeted to the feet of the crowd. Moments later, the plane crashed into a patch of trees fifty feet away.

Stites was dead on impact. The Los Angeles Times reported, "His spinal column was driven into the skull."

Immediately after the accident, Carl Laemmle himself announced that all further festivities would be cancelled, and the crowds made their way home. Besides reports of the accident that hit the news in the days that followed, Frank Stites name disappeared from the papers.

Perhaps all that Stites wanted was acknowledgement, which is why his spirit still lingers on the backlot.



Frank Stites lies still in this photo taken moments after his tragic fall. Photo from "The Ghost of Frank Stites" Facebook page.

After learning about Frank Stites and his dreadful fate, John Murdy said that with the help of a mannequin, he created an effigy of the doomed pilot to let him know he wouldn't be forgotten (if you ride the Universal Backlot Tour, you may spot it along the route). Murdy claims that since then, the sightings of a lone man in an aerial outfit have stopped, and he hasn't heard the giggling since.

In keeping with the times, The Ghost of Frank Stites now has his own Facebook page, and some Universal employees have taken to dressing up as his corpse to frighten visitors to the studio's annual Halloween attraction.

So, if you're on the backlot and happen to see a man walking around dressed as an aviator, it's probably a live human being wearing a costume.

Probably.

The article was originally posted on October 2, 2011.

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Axe-wielding clown chases Dane as craze spreads

26/09

thelocal.dk

The Local



Axe-wielding clown chases Dane as craze spreads

The Local · 17 Oct 2016, 11:23

Published: 17 Oct 2016 11:23 GMT+02:00

A clown wielding an axe chased a 22-year-old Danish man down a street in Holbæk, Zealand, late on Sunday night, after a weekend of 'creepy clown' sightings.

The "creepy clown" craze exploded in Denmark over the weekend, with more than eighteen new cases of clowns scaring people across the country.

“The 22-year-old was very, very shocked when we spoke to him later that night,” Carsten Andersen, communications manager at Mid and West Zealand Police, told the local TV Øst broadcaster of the axe attack.“It is a completely unacceptable way to behave.”

Andersen said another 20-year-old man had been frightened on Saturday night when a clown leapt out of some bushes in Holbæk. A clown was also seen roaming the nearby town of Svinninge.

In southern Zealand there was also a string of clown sightings over the weekend, with one woman attacked by clown at midnight on Sunday in Præstø as she took her dog for a walk. The clown chased her all the way back to her house, where she managed to lock herself in and call the police.

Men dressed as clowns were also reported roaming in nearby Mern and Næstved.

“They were not the same,” Søren Østervig of the local south Zealand police told TV Øst. “In Mern it was two young guys in masks who detonated fireworks. In Præstø it was a single person wearing a full clown costume.”

“They shout and chase people if they get the opportunity, and it makes people really scared,” he said.

The “creepy clown” or “killer clown” phenomenon reemerged in the US this August, and has rapidly spread worldwide, with reported sightings in recent weeks in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Ireland and the Netherlands.

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ʿAZĀDĀRĪ, to hold a commemoration of the dead, by extension, mourning, a word deriving from Arabic *ʿazāʾ*, which means commemorating the dead. This is also the basic meaning of the cognate *taʿzīa*, which came to designate in addition the passion plays mounted in Moḥarram. Details of the commemoration of the dead as regulated by *feqh* are to be found in the chapters headed *al-janāʾez* (funerals) in the handbooks of all the legal schools.

Because of diverse historical, geographical, and cultural factors, a great variety of funerary rites and death customs has developed in Iran. Despite a series of political and religious changes, beliefs and customs regarding death have been deeply influenced by the distant past. A general survey of pre-Islamic funerary practices on the Iranian plateau has not yet been made, but an extensive archeological survey of sedentary Central Asia—a vast area of Iranian culture—has demonstrated the existence of a great diversity in the disposal of the dead (see F. Grenet, *Les pratiques funeraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation*, Paris, 1984, which discusses cremation, funerary towers, burial pits, embalmment, inhumation, ossuaries, and cinerary urns). Mourning customs in Central Asia generally followed non-Zoroastrian patterns (ibid., pp. 253ff.). References to pre-Islamic funerary practices are to be found in various versions of the Iranian national epic, as reflected in both textual and visual materials. Some of these practices may have continued to exercise an influence in the Islamic period. A case in point is the cult of kings and heroes such as Sīāvoš, tentatively identified by Russian scholars as the figure being mourned in a Panjikent wall painting (see E. Yarshater "Taʿziyeh and Pre-Islamic Mourning Rites in Iran," in P. J. Chelkowski, ed., *Taʿziyeh. Ritual and Drama in Iran*, New York, 1979, pp. 88-94, and in *Camb. Hist. Iran* III/1, pp. 449, 450, n. 2, and F. Grenet, op. cit., pls. XLVII and XLVIII). The cult of Sīāvoš may have influenced the Shiʿite mourning rituals of Moḥarram (Yarshater, ibid., p. 151); some connection has also been found between this wall painting and mourning scenes found in the iconography of Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma* (O. Grabar, "Notes on the Iconography of the "Demotte" Shah-Nama," in R. Pinder-Wilson, ed., *Paintings from Islamic Lands*, Oxford, I 969, pp. 32-47, 45ff.; N. M. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts*, London, 1977, subject index under coffins, funerals, mourners, processions, etc.; J. Norgren and D. Davis, *Preliminary Index of Shah-nameh illustration*, Ann Arbor, 1969). The *Šāh-nāma* abounds in references to ancient funerary beliefs and customs such as so-called Scythian Practices (see ASB ii. AMONG THE SCYTHIANS); in addition to mummification and embalmment, they include a cult of the horses of the dead prince or hero (see J. Ḵāleqī Moṭlaq, "Yak-ī daḵma kard-aš ze somm-e sotūr," *Našrīya-ye Dāneškada-ye adabīyāt wa ʿolūm-e ensānī*, Dānešgāh-e Āḏarābādagān, 1357 Š./1978, no. 124, pp. 462-70; idem, "Yakī dāstān ast por āb-e čašm," *Iran Nameh* 1/2, 1983, pp. 164-205; F. Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname*, Berlin, 1935, under *asp*, *summ*, *Raxš*, etc.) as well as the destruction of possessions and the suicide of wives, concubines, and slaves (see, e.g., *Šāh-nāma* [Moscow] IV, p. 65 vv. 888ff.). Customs such as disheveling, cutting or pulling out the hair, and biting or ripping the flesh off the arms, are also attested in the *Šāh-nāma* (see VI, p. 315 vv. 1558ff., and F. Wolff, op. cit., under *sōg*).

Certain features of ancient practices persisted into the Islamic period, such as the use of banners (*aʿlām*, see ʿALAM VA ʿALĀMAT) and horses in funeral processions (see H. Massé, *Croyances et coutumes persanes*, Paris, 1938, I, pp. 86ff.). Mourning colors tended to remain dark: blue and purple were especially favored, with black, gray, and brown also being used (for the currency of these colors in pre-Islamic Iran, see H. Massé, *Firdousi et l'épopée nationale*, Paris, 1935, p. 204; Wolff, op. cit., under *banafš*, *kabūd*, *sīāh*). Self-laceration and the tearing of clothes—practices condemned by Islam—persisted well into the Islamic period, being practiced especially by rural women. The practice of repairing tombs eight days before Nowrūz is an obvious link of funerary customs of the Islamic period with ancient times (see Massé, *Croyances et coutumes* I, p. 115). Finally, mention may be made of funerary dances—pre-Islamic in origin—which persisted until recently in Tajikistan (see Grenet, op. cit., p. 259).

In general, however, Islamic tenets and practices relating to death have predominated: Belief in Azrael, the angel of death; Monkar and Nakīr, the interrogating angels; the torment of the tomb; and the entry of the soul after death into the *barzaḵ* (an intermediary realm) have determined popular conceptions of death and the passage into the hereafter (see Massé, op. cit., I, pp. 113ff.; B. A. Donaldson, *The Wild Rue*, London, 1938, pp. 70ff.).

When death approaches, the expiring person pronounces the *šahāda*, encouraged and accompanied by those around him. His body is laid out in the direction of the Kaʿba, and to ease his passage into the hereafter the *sūra yā-sīn* (Koran 36) is recited. The body is ritually washed (*ḡosl-e mayyet*) by the *morda-šūr* (corpse-washer) according to precise regulations and then wrapped in a series of funerary garments of which the outer-most is the *kafan* (shroud) before being placed in a *tābūt* or *naḵl* (bier). Martyrs are not washed and are buried in the clothes in which they met their death (Massé, *Croyances et coutumes* I, p. 95). Following the tradition established by the Prophet, most schools of law—including the Jaʿfarī—recommend prompt burial, generally on the day following death. This is held to have led on occasion to fatal errors, with apparently dead persons being buried alive (see Y. Ragib, "Faux morts et enterrés vifs dans l'espace musulman," *Stud. Isl.* 57, 1983, pp. 5-30; Massé, op. cit., I, p. 95). Sometimes the bier is placed on a hearse (*naʿš-keš*), but more often it is carried by young men on their shoulders, walking quickly. Passers-by participate in this meritorious act by helping to carry it for a few steps, meanwhile reciting the *šahāda* (ibid., pp. 98ff). Once in the cemetery (*gūrestān/qabrestān*), the corpse is laid in the tomb, without bier, lying on its right side and facing the Kaʿba. Canonical prayers for the dead (*namāz-e mayyet* or *ṣalāt al-janāza*) are followed by supplicatory prayers on his behalf (*doʿā-ye amwāt*).

Post-burial rites vary from a simple funeral gathering, known as *majles-e tarḥīm* (assembly for invoking mercy on the deceased) or *fāteḥa-ḵᵛānī* (recitation of *sūrat al-fāteḥa*), to a full *ḵatm* (reading of the entire Koran), with separate ceremonies for men and women, known respectively as *ḵatm-e mardāna* and *ḵatm-e zanāna*. Those attending such gatherings are served food and drinks (generally tea or coffee). The *ḵatm* takes place at the latest three days after the funeral (Massé, op. cit., I, p. 104). Sometimes a Koran reading takes place at the graveside, three days after burial; this is designed to assist the deceased in his interrogation by Monkar and Nakīr (see Donaldson, op. cit., p. 74; cf. the Zoroastrian parallel with the three days' judgment by Srōš and Rašn; see I. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, p. 247, tr. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern, *Muslim Studies*, New York, 1977, I, p. 224 n. 3). Further ceremonies are held one week (*hafta* or *pā-gereftan*), forty days (*čella* or *arbaʿīn*), and one year (*sāl*) after death, and optional ceremonies in commemoration of the dead are held in the cemeteries on the occasion of various religious festivals. It is also customary for women to visit tombs every Thursday evening (Massé, op. cit., I, pp. 106ff.). Prayers and passages from the Koran are recited, and food—mostly *ḥalwa*—and alms are distributed

(Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 74ff. nn. 11 to 18; Massé, op. cit., I, pp. 111ff.). Sometimes complete meals (*sofra*) are offered in memory of the dead.

Although not viewed as forbidden (*ḥarām*) by most legal schools—including the Jaʿfarī—the construction of buildings over tombs, as well as decorating and inscribing them, is regarded as reprehensible (*makrūh*). Nonetheless, Iran—like other Muslim countries—has seen a proliferation of richly laid-out tombs, mausoleums, and sanctuaries (see "Ḳabr," "Ḳubba," "Maḳbara" in *EI*2; Massé, op. cit., I, pp. 102, 114ff.). A distinctively Iranian trait, found at tombs in tribal and other areas, is the presence of funerary effigies of lions or rams as symbols of bravery, connected, perhaps, both with the proverbial valor of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭāleb (Asadallāh "the lion of God") and with pre-Islamic cults and beliefs (ibid., pp. 116ff.).

In literature, mourning has inspired the genres of eulogy (*faẓāʾel* or *manāqeb*), dirge (*nūḥa/nawḥa*), and elegy (*marṯīa*).

Iran's adherence to Shiʿism from the Safavid period onward introduced new elements into Iranian funerary practice. Dust gathered from the tomb of Imam Ḥosayn (*torbat*) at Karbalā would be mixed with water to form a beverage given to the dying. Burial at the Shiʿite shrines in the *ʿatabāt* in Iraq and at Mašhad and Qom within Iran has been regarded as highly desirable. From Qajar times onward, the transport of corpses over long distances for interment in sacred territory became a common practice, one involving both legal and sanitary problems (Massé, op. cit., I, p. 102 n. 2). Bodies buried in Mašhad would often be carried around the tomb of Imam Reżā in a kind of *ṭawāf* before interment (E. Šakūrzāda, *ʿAqāyed o rosūm-e ʿāmma-ye mardom-e Ḵorāsān*, Tehran, 1346 Š./1967, pp. 180ff.). Finally, various aspects of the Moḥarram rituals have been imitated in general Iranian funerary practice (see I. Lassy, *The Muharram Mysteries among the Azerbeijan Turks of Caucasia*, Helsingfors, 1916, pp. 132-209).

The mourning ceremonies of Moḥarram, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Ḥosayn at Karbalā in 61/680 and reaching their climax on the tenth day of the month (ʿĀšūrāʾ, q.v.), originated in Arab Iraq (see M. Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of ʿĀshūrāʾ in Twelver Shiʿism*, The Hague, 1978). However, they were held in Iran as early as the twelfth century, when both Sunnites and Shiʿites participated in them (see J. Calmard, *Le culte de l'Imam Husayn*, thesis, Paris, 1975, pp. 434-49). In the Safavid period, the annual mourning ceremonies for Imam Ḥosayn, combined with the ritual cursing of his enemies, acquired the status of a national institution. Expressions of grief such as *sīna-zanī* (beating the chest), *zanjīr-zanī* (beating oneself with chains), and *tīḡ-zanī* or *qama-zanī* (mortifying oneself with swords or knives) emerged as common features of the proliferating mourning-processions (*dasta-gardānī*). In some towns these processions often led to clashes between rival factions known as *ḥaydarī*s and *neʿmatī*s (q.v.). Mourning for the martyred imam also took place in assemblies held in buildings erected especially for the purpose, known either as *ḥosaynīya*s or *takīa*s (tekkes), as well as in mosques and private houses. At these assemblies, called either *rawża-ḵᵛānī* (the recitation of *Rawżat al-šohadāʾ* by Ḥosayn Wāʿeẓ Kāšefī (d. 910/1504-05) or similar works on martyrs of the Imamite line) or *marṯīa-ḵᵛānī* (the recitation of elegies), professional reciters and preachers would recount the deeds of the martyrs and curse their enemies, arousing the emotions of the mourners who responded by singing dirges at appropriate intervals in the narrative (see M. J. Maḥjūb "Az fażāʾel o manāqeb-ḵᵛānī tā rawża-ḵᵛānī," *Iran Nameh* 2/3, 1984, pp. 402-31). Theatrical representations of the tragedy at Karbalā (*šabīh-ḵᵛānī* or *taʿzīa*)—possibly the most remarkable feature of the entire corpus of Moḥarram ritual—also made their appearance in the Safavid period (on this significant development, see the works listed in P. Chelkowski, ed., *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and*

Drama in Iran, New York, 1979, pp. 255-68 (“Bibliographical Spectrum”), and J. Calmard, “Moḥarram Ceremonies and Diplomacy,” in E. Bosworth and C. Hillenbrand, eds., *Qajar Iran: Political, Social and Cultural Change*, *1800-1925*, Edinburgh, 1983, p. 224).

Commemoration of the drama at Karbalā reached its apogee in the mid-nineteenth century. By then it had spread across a vast area, extending from the Middle East and the Caucasus eastwards to India, Indonesia, and Thailand, and it had even been established in Trinidad by Indian Muslim migrants. In Iran, the memory of Karbalā came to permeate social and cultural life, with mourning assemblies and dramatic performances being organized throughout the year, not only in Moḥarram. The occasion might be furnished by the death of a revered person or the need to fulfill a vow. Gatherings known as *sofra* (lit. tablecloth), in which the preparation and serving of food played a focal role, were exclusively feminine: the preachers as well as the mourners were all women, and the lives and tribulations of women such as Fāṭema and Zaynab were the principal topic of commemoration. Gatherings of this type appear to have originated in the late nineteenth century.

From the period of the Constitutional Revolution (1905-11) onward, mourning gatherings increasingly assumed a political aspect. Following an old established tradition, preachers compared the oppressors of the time with Imam Ḥosayn’s enemies, the Omayyads (see J. Calmard, “L’Iran sous Naseroddin Chah et les derniers Qadjars,” in J. Aubin, ed., *Le monde iranien et l’Islam* IV, Paris, 1976-77, pp. 189-94; A. Fathi, “Preachers as Substitutes for Mass Media: The Case of Iran 1905-1909,” in E. Kedourie and S. G. Haim, eds., *Towards a Modern Iran: Studies in Thought, Politics and Society*, London, 1980, pp. 169-84).

The political function of Moḥarram observances was very marked in the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution of 1357 Š./1978-79, as well as during the revolution itself. In addition, the implicit self-identification of the Muslim revolutionaries with Imam Ḥosayn led to a blossoming of the cult of the martyr, expressed most vividly, perhaps, in the vast cemetery of Behešt-e Zahrā, to the south of Tehran, where the martyrs of the revolution and the war against Iraq are buried (on the connection between recent events and the Moḥarram cult in Iran, see E. Neubauer, “Muharram-Bräuche im heutigen Persien,” *Der Islam* 49/2, 1972, pp. 250-72; G. E. Thaiss, *Religious Symbolism and Social Change: The Drama of Husayn*, Ph.D. thesis, Washington University, 1973; P. J. Chelkowski, “Iran: Mourning Becomes Revolution,” *Asia* 3, May-June, 1980, pp. 30-37; M. J. Fisher, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1980, pp. 136ff.; H. G. Kippenberg, “Jeder Tag ʿAshura, jedes Grab Kerbala. Zur Ritualisierung der Strassenkämpfe im Iran,” in K. Greussing, ed., *Religion und Politik im Iran*, Frankfurt am Main, 1981, pp. 217-56; M. E. Hooglund, “Hoseyn als Vermittler, Hoseyn als Vorbild. Anpassung und Revolution im iranischen Dorf,” ibid., pp. 257-76; M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shiʿi Islam*, New Haven and London, 1985, pp. 233ff.).

Finally among modern developments, it may be noted that the legitimacy of some forms of self-mortification and of dramatic performances has been a subject of controversy among Shiʿite communities in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq (see W. Ende, “The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shiʿite ʿUlamāʾ,” *Der Islam*, 55/1, 1978, pp. 19-36. See also ʿĀŠŪRĀʾ; MOḤARRAM; and MOURNING.

For a music sample, see Abbās Khāni - Navā.

For a music sample, see Marsiye K̲āni.

For a music sample, see Nowhe of Men's Mourning.

For a music sample, see Nowhe Zeynab.

For a music sample, see Ta‘zia of Qazvin.

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For details of Shiʿite burial regulations see Moḥaqqeq Ḥellī, *Šarāʾeʿ al-eslām*, tr. A. Querry, *Recueil des lois concernant les musulmans chyites*, 2 vols., Paris, 1872, I, pp. 27-36, 96-100.

On regional and tribal beliefs and customs, which are often quite distinct from those generally prevailing in Iran, see ʿA. Bolūkbāšī, “Āyīn-e be ḵāk sepordan-e morda wa sūgvārī-e ān,” *Payām-e novīn* 7/9, 1344 Š./1965, pp. 73-84.

Ṣ. Homāyūnī, *Farhang-e mardom-e Sarvestān*, Tehran, 1349 Š./1960, pp. 520-22.

Y. Majīdzāda et al., “Āyīn-e sūgvārī dar Delfān-e Lorestān,” *Honar o mardom*, N.S., 25, pp. 8-13.

G. H. Nawwābī, “Rasm-e taʿzīat dar Šaḡānān,” *Āryānā* 12/4, p. 241.

M. Šafīānī and B. Dāvarī, “Marāsem-e ʿazādārī dar Baḵtīārī,” *Ketāb-e hafta* 7, pp. 115-16.

E. Šakūrzāda, *ʿAqāyed o rosūm-e ʿāmma-ye mardom-e Ḵorāsān*, Tehran, 1346 Š./1967, pp. 177-93.

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AŽDAHĀ

“dragon,” various kinds of snake-like, mostly gigantic, monsters living in the air, on earth, or in the sea (also designated by other terms) sometimes connected with natural phenomena, especially rain and eclipses.

AŽDAHĀ “dragon,” various kinds of snake-like, mostly gigantic, monsters living in the air, on earth, or in the sea (also designated by other terms) sometimes connected with natural phenomena, especially rain and eclipses.

i. *In Old and Middle Iranian*.

ii. *In Persian literature*.

iii. *In Iranian folktales*.

iv. *Armenian aždahak*.

i. In Old and Middle Iranian

At the time of the Indo-Iranian unity, the Indo-Iranians must have imagined dragons restraining the heavenly waters and causing drought, and not releasing them until slain by a god or hero, as in the Rigvedic myth of Indra and Vṛtra. In the Iranian Zoroastrian literature, however, other than Gandarəβa who lives in the Vourukaša Sea, dragons are rarely mentioned in connection with water, though they are sometimes said to dwell by rivers. The demon which causes drought seems not to be a dragon (Av. Apaoša, Mid. Pers. Apōš); instead, the Zoroastrian dragons, materially huge monsters with ravenous appetites for men and horses, have been given their place in the Mazdayasnian view of the world, in which all monsters are the creations of evil and thus antagonists of the true, Mazdayasnian religion. Still but sketched, or briefly alluded to, in the extant Avesta, this aspect of the Iranian dragons is elaborated throughout the later religious writings. In Manichean myths, however, we notice a change in the concept of the monsters, which are now located in the oceans, presumably as the result of Mesopotamian influence.

The most common Indo-Iranian word for dragon, Indian *ahi*, Avestan *aži*, originally meant only “snake,” a meaning which Avestan *aži* still has beside “dragon.” These two words are etymologically related to words in other Indo-European languages such as Latin *anguis* (hence *anguilla*, related to Germanic “eel;” see further Mayrhofer, *Etymological Dictionary* I, p. 68, and III, p. 638). In later Iranian the word *aži* has mostly been replaced, partly for reasons of linguistic taboo, partly probably for phonetic reasons. Thus only Yidgha and Munji still have *(y)īž* < *aži*; Middle and New Persian have *mār*, which may derive from **marθra* “killer” (though there are phonetic difficulties in such a derivation) and *kirm/kerm* “worm”, Av. *kərəma*, Sogd. *kyrm-* (translating Mid. Pers. *azdahāg*, Parth. *aždahāg*, see Henning, *Sogdica*, pp. 21f.); Shughni has *sāɣ*, which may be from **sušnā* “the hisser;” etc. (see Morgenstierne, “An Ancient Indo-Iranian Word for "Dragon"” on this and other words for “snake” and “dragon” in Iranian; on “snake” in Indo-Aryan, see G. Buddruss, “Zur Benennung der Schlange”).

Other dragons or dragon-like monsters in Old and Middle Iranian are the Avestan Gandarəβa (Pahlavi Gandarb/Gandarw), the Pahlavi Kirm (battled and vanquished by Ardašīr I, see below,

AŽDAHĀ II), the Zoroastrian Middle Persian Gōčihr and Mūšparīg, and some of the Manichean Middle Persian *mazan*s.

Indo-European and Indo-Iranian connections. Myths of dragons and the slaying of dragons were common among both other Indo-European peoples and the Near-Eastern peoples with whom the Iranians came into contact from the first half of the first millennium B.C. We need only recall the Teutonic myths of the Nibelungen and Beowulf on the one hand, and the Babylonian dragon-slaying myths on the other. The myth which relates how Dahāg was chained to Mount Demāvand by Ferēdūn but is unchained at the end of time (see below) may reflect Indo-European myths of monsters which are vanquished by a god or hero and imprisoned or chained, but sometimes are liberated at the end of time and come forth to wreak havoc among gods and men. In Greek mythology Zeus battles the Titans and imprisons them in Tartarus; according to some authors, he later set them free (see, e.g., Harvey, *The Oxford Companion*, p. 126a). In the Scandinavian mythology, the monstrous Fenris wolf is chained by the god Týr, but at Ragnarokk (Götterdämmerung) it is unchained and is fought by Óðinn, whom it swallows, but is itself slain by Óðinn's son (see. e.g., Davidson, *Gods and Myths*, pp. 38, 59). It is of course difficult to establish detailed connections between these various Indo-European myths, and some scholars prefer to see individual developments rather than elements inherited from a distant past (see, e.g., Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, p. 283).

In Indian mythology the only dragon of importance is the snake/dragon (*ahi*) vanquished by Indra and usually referred to as Vṛtra. The origin of the name has been much discussed and is important for Indian as well as Iranian mythology since in Iranian the standing epithet of Indra, *vṛṭra-han/Vṛtra-han* "smiter of obstacles or defenses/slayer of Vṛtra," corresponding to Av. *vərəθraγan*, was thematicized and came to designate one of the most important gods in the Iranian pantheon: Av. Vərəθraγna, Mid. Pers. Wahrām, NPers. Bahrām. The *ahi* Vṛtra is described in the Rigveda as keeping the (heavenly) waters imprisoned in caves in the mountains. With the *vajra* (in the Avesta *vazra* is the chief weapon of Miθra), Indra smites him on the neck, splits his head thus freeing the waters, which immediately rush out like cows and run to the sea. In India the epithet is given also to Agni (the fire-god) and Soma; in the Avesta also to Haoma. In the Avesta and the Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts, however, the epithet is never given to any of the dragon-slaying heroes and no gods (including Vərəθraγna) slay dragons. Nevertheless, this concept may have had a place in the mythology of at least some of the Iranian peoples since in Manichean cosmology the dragon-slaying god Adamas is called Wšγnyy in Sogdian (< OIr. Wrθragna; see further below) and also elsewhere in the later tradition some local counterparts of Vərəθraγna preserve traces of his dragon-killing function: Thus, e.g., Armenian Vahagn kills a dragon (see also Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, pp. 175-78; and BAHRĀM).

Whereas in the Indian myths the dragon-slayer is the warrior god, in the Zoroastrian myths the dragon-slayers are superhuman heroes: Θraētaona, who slays Aži Dahāka, and Kərəsāspa, who slays Aži Sruuara, the horned dragon. Kərəsāspa seems to have no parallel in Indian myths; however, Θraētaona, son of Āθβiia, appears to be related to another Avestan hero, Θrita, whose name corresponds formally to the Indian Trita Āptya; the patronym Āptya, however, corresponds to that of the Avestan Θraētaona. In the Hōm yašt (*Y.* 9) the first mortals to press the *haoma* are enumerated: the first was Vīuuaŋᵛhan, father of Yima, the second Āθβiia, father of Θraētaona, and the third was Θrita (literally "the third"), father of Uruuāxšaiia and Kərəsāspa. In the Rigveda, Trita Āptya is portrayed as the first sacrificer to prepare the *soma*. Clearly these various mythical persons are related (see Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, pp. 99f.). The Rigvedic Trita Āptya is no dragon-slayer but he does appear in a myth which bears great similarity to that of Indra's slaying of Vṛtra: In addition to

this feat, Indra also liberates some cows which are held imprisoned in a cave by a certain Vala (whose name may or may not be etymologically related to Vṛtra: IE. root **u̯el-*; cf. Eng. “wall”) but sometimes this feat is ascribed to Trita Āptya.

It therefore seems clear that although dragon-slaying gods and heroes were part of Indo-Iranian mythology, India and Iran developed distinct myths early, changing, deleting, and adding details. In India dragon-slaying was made a characteristic feature of the god Indra. The notion of a god of victory **Vrtraǵhan* “smiter of obstacles/defenses” was probably also common heritage, but whereas the epithet in Iran became the name of the god himself, in India it was given to the warrior god Indra, prompted by his connection with the dragon-slaying (cf., e.g., *Rigveda* 1.32.2 *ahann ahim* “he struck/slew the dragon,” with the same verb *han-/ghn-*, Av. *jan-/γn-* “to strike, kill,” as in *vṛtra-han-/ghn-*, *vərəθra-jan/γn(a)-*). For succinct overviews of the arguments and various theories, see Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, pp. 175-78; Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, pp. 63f., especially p. 64 nn. 279-80; see also BAHRĀM).

The only other dragon/snake mentioned in the Rigveda is the “dragon of the deep” (*ahi budhnya*), who is mentioned in lists of lesser divinities and said to dwell at the bottom of heavenly rivers (*budhne nadīnāṃ rajaḥsu sīdan*; Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, cols. 909f.).

In India the dragon-fight was symbolically connected with New-year and the end of drought but in ancient Iran there is no trace of a connection between the killing of the dragon and Now Rūz. Scholars attempting to see such a connection (e.g. Dumézil, *Le problème des centaures*, pp. 72f., and Widengren, *Religionen*, pp. 41-49) have failed to prove it (Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, p. 102 n. 110).

In Mithraism a reference to a simulated dragon-slaying is found in a passage from Lampridius (*Commodus* 9), quoted from Loisy by Widengren, *Religionen*, pp. 44f. n. 16, but otherwise this myth seems to be quite absent from Mithraism, where the snake apparently was “a symbol of a beneficial, life-giving force” (Hinnells, “Reflections,” p. 295).

Dragons and dragon-like monsters in the Zoroastrian scriptures. 1. Ažis. 2. Gandarəβa. (On Gōčihr and Mūšparīg see *Dragons in astrology*, below.)

1. *Ažis*. Physical descriptions are found of several *ažis* in the Avesta:

Aži Dahāka had three mouths (*θrizafanəm*), three heads (*θrikamarəδəm*), and six eyes (*xšuuaš.ašīm*). (See further on *Aži Dahāka* below.)

Aži Sruuara, the horned dragon, also called Aži Zairita, was the yellow dragon that *Kərəsāspa* slew (*Y*. 9. 1; *Yt*. 19.40; see on the *Legend of Kərəsāspa* below) “who swallowed horses (*aspō.gar-*), who swallowed men (*nərə.gar-*), the poisonous yellow one, over whom poison flowed the height of a spear;” also described as (*Y*. 9.30) “the terrifying (*sima-*), poison-spitting (*vīšō.vaēpa-*) dragon.” The *Dādestān ī dēnīg* (71) appears to have preserved two more old epithets of Aži Sruuara no longer found in the Avesta; here we read that Aži Srūwar was one of the seven worst sinners (two of the others being Dahāg and his mother Wadag, see below), being close to Ahriman himself, and that in addition to swallowing men and horses in a terrifying way (*sahmgenīhā . . . asp ud mard-ōbārīh kard*), it was also a highway robber (*rāhdārī ud rāhbīmēnīdārīh . . . kard*; cf. the dragon in *Aogəmadaēcā* below and note *Pahlavi Rivayat*, p. 69 par. 16, where Kirsāsp tells Ohrmazd that he has killed seven gigantic *rāhdār*s). In the *Dēnkard* it is said to be skilled in witchcraft (Dresden, p. 91 [109.6]; Madan, p. 747.20; tr. West, 8.5.23, p. 111; it is spelled *slwbl yz* and *slwblyz*). There seem to

be no similar creatures in the old Indian mythology; however, in Sumero-Semitic culture, art and literature, horned and multi-headed dragons and other monsters are common-place. The number of heads is often seven (see, e.g., the illustrations in Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*; see also Christensen, *Démonologie*, pp. 20-23).

A dragon guarding a road is described in *Aogəmadaēcā* 78, where it is compared with Vayu: "the road which a dragon guards, horse-*crushing (*aspaŋhāδō*), man-*crushing (*vīraŋhāδō*), man-slaying (*vīraja*), without compassion." (The element *-hāδa-* may belong to the root *had-*, OInd. *sad-* "to treat roughly" according to H. W. Bailey, "Arya", p. 526, who quotes *Yt*. 14.56 where we find the parallels *jana . . . nōiṯ janən* haδa . . . nōiṯ *haδən*). The descriptions of *ažis* in the *Vidēvdād* are of snakes rather than of dragons: "of the snakes that crawl on their bellies (*ažinąm udarō.θrąsanąm*)" (*Vd.* 145; on *θrąsa-* see Hoffmann, *Aufsätze* I, p. 197 n. 2); "swift snakes (*ažaiiō xšuuaēβåŋhō*)" (*Vd*. 18.65).

The Aži Raoiδita, the red dragon (in contradistinction to the Aži Zairita "yellow dragon" = Aži Sruuara), ought to have been one of the most important Avestan dragons (excepting Aži Dahāka, see below) since it was, together with the "daēuua-created winter" (*ziiąmca daēuuo.dātəm*), Aŋra Mainiiu's counter-creation (*paitiiārəm frākərəṇtaṯ*) to Ahura Mazdā's creation of Airiiana Vaējah (*Vd*. 1.2; see Christensen, *Le premier chapitre du Vendidad*, pp. 23, 26-27), and thus should by rights have been the most loathed creature in the original home of the Iranians. However, it is mentioned only here. The Aži Raoiδita was probably not identical with Aži Dahāka. As dragons, the only point they had in common was that they were created by Aŋra Mainiiu as the worst thing in the world, but Aži Dahāka is nowhere said to be red, and is nowhere connected with winter. The Pahlavi translation and commentary has *az-iz i rōdīg*; *was bawēd* "and the river snake; there is a large number" without further comments. The corresponding text in the *Bundahišn* (chap. 31) describes the dragon of the counter-creation as *mār ī pad parrag ud ān-iz ī nē pad parrag* "the snake with wings and the one with no wings" (TD1, p. 176.1-2; TD2, p. 205.7-8; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 264f.; cf. Christensen, op. cit., p. 27).

An Aži Višāpa is mentioned in *Nirangistan* 48, where it is said that the act of offering libations to the waters between sunset and sunrise is no better than throwing them into the *mouth of the Aži Višāpa. The two manuscripts of the *Nirangistan* (neither of them old and trustworthy) have *všāpahe* (TD) and *višāpahe* (HJ), the Pahlavi rendering has *MYA Y ŠPYL* "good water," which may or may not be a scribal corruption of *ʾp Y wš*, i.e., *az ī wiš* "poison snake," as suggested by Waag (p. 109; see Sanjana's text p. 197, variants listed on p. 43). The epithet *višāpa* is commonly interpreted as containing the word *vī/īša-* "poison" (Bartholomae, *AirWb*., col. 1473 "whose juices are poison," Boyce, *Zoroastrianism* I, p. 91 n. 42 "dragon with poisonous slaver," etc.) and although such an interpretation lies close at hand in view of the other dragons' association with poison, the Armenian form of the word, *višap* (Georgian *vešapi*, also a fabulous serpent; Syriac *wšpʾ*) must be derived from **vēšā/ăp* (Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, p. 247; Benveniste, "L'origine"), i.e., Old Iranian **u̯aiš-* (Benveniste, p. 7, reconstructs **vā/ăišapa-* but still assumes some derivative of "poison"). The etymology of the term is still unclear; besides the older proposals (cf. *AirWb*.) note that Rigvedic has two verbs *viṣ* "to pour out" (intr.) and "seize," both used in the context of "water" and the second in a context involving Indra, the *vajra*, and the dragon *ahi*, but neither verb gives a totally satisfactory meaning for the term. Perhaps we should compare Avestan *vaēšah* "foulness," so that this dragon was originally the dragon "of foul waters" or the dragon "which fouls the waters." The importance of the epithet lies in the fact that Armenian *višap* has become the designation of a whole class of dragons (see Benveniste, "L'origine") and the hero Vahagn is there called *višapakʿal* "dragon-slaying."

In the Middle Iranian period, an *aždahā* was often depicted on banners to frighten the enemy by its ferocious aspect. Such banners are referred to several times in the *Šāh-nāma* as *aždahā-peykar* (e.g., ed. Borūḵīm, II, p. 480 v. 775, IV, p. 924 v. 949). An early reference to them is found in Lucian (*De historia conscribenda* 29, pp. 42f.), where we are told that the Parthians used banners with different emblems to differentiate divisions of their army, a dragon-banner (*drákōn*) preceding—Lucian believes—a thousand-man division. (See also AŽDAHĀ II)

2. Gandarəβa/Gandarw (or Gandarb, spelled *gndlp*). Among the other various noxious creatures depicted in the Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature we find the sea monster Gandarəβa, which may have been a dragon of the sea, though descriptions as to its exact nature are lacking. It was a monster with yellow heals (*Zairipāšna-*) and living in the sea (*upāpa-*), which, on emerging to destroy the entire creation of Aša, was fought and vanquished by Kərəsāspa (*Yt*. 5, 38, 15.28 19.41; cf. Christensen, *Démonologie*, pp. 18f., and see below). Like the other dragons it had a ravenous appetite, even more so since it was able to swallow twelve provinces at once (*pad ēw-bār 12 deh bē jūd*; *Pahlavi Rivayat*, p. 67 par. 9). Etymologically the name equals OInd. *gandharva*, a beneficent mythical being, said to be surrounded by the heavenly waters—which flow down at his look—sometimes (in later literature, usually) portrayed as a heavenly musician. It is through the "Iranian polarization" of the inherited Aryan mythological concepts, it seems, that *gandarəβa* has been turned into a sea monster. Of all the Old Iranian monsters Gandarəβa is the most reminiscent of Near-Eastern, Semitic, sea monsters. (On the OInd. *gandharva* see, e.g., Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, pp. 248ff.; Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, col. 378; Dumézil, *Le problème*, devotes several chapters to this monster.) It also recalls the Manichean water dragons, the *mazan*s (see below). The *gandarəβa* survives in Sogdian as *γntrw* (for genuine Iranian **γntṛβ* through Indian influence) and the entire Avestan phrase (*upāpō gandarəβō*) as *wpʾpγntrw* (P 3.131, see Henning, "Sogdian Tales," pp. 481f.); it has survived in modern Shughni dialects as the designation of a monster or dragon, but also a werewolf (see Morgenstierne, *Etymological Vocabulary*, p. 110).

Aži Dahāka. Aži Dahāka (Pahl. Az[i]dahāg, spelled *ʾcydhʾk*, or Dahāg) belongs to the realm of mythologized history or historicized mythology. He is depicted in the Avesta as a dragon-like (*aži*) monster with three mouths (*θrizafanəm*), three heads (*θrikamarəδəm*), six eyes (*xšuuaš.ašīm*), with a thousand viles (*hazaŋrā.yaoxštīm*), very strong (*aš.aojaŋhəm*), a demoniac devil (*daēuuīm drujim*). For the rest he behaves like the other heroes and non-heroes of the Avestan mythological prehistory, and it is not clear whether he was originally considered as a human in dragon-shape or a dragon in man-shape. The former alternative is suggested by his epithet *dahāka-* if it means "man(-like)" (Schwartz, *Orientalia* 49, pp. 123f., who for the word formation compares *mašiia-* and *mašiiāka-*, and for the meaning compares Khotanese *daha-* "male," Wakhi *δāi* "man," and translates Aži Dahāka as "he hominoid serpent, the Snake-man"). However, the traditional connection of Av. *dahāka* with the OInd. *dāsa*s and *dasyu*s, who are also among the opponents of Indra and who are usually assumed to be the indigenous pre-Aryan inhabitants of northwestern India can not be wholly discarded. (Note that Pashto *lōy* "big" is likely to be from *dahāka*, which may point to an original meaning "big, huge.") (See also Christensen, *Démonologie*, pp. 20ff.)

A number of elements of the myth of Aži Dahāka have been preserved in the Zoroastrian texts: In their struggle to regain the *xᵛarənah* after it left Yima, Ahura Mazdā and Aŋrō Mainiiu each employed their best helpers. Ātar and Aži Dahāka with his brother Spitiiura here faced one another and threatened one another, but the threats of Ātar were the most efficient ones, and Evil's attempt was foiled. According to the Avestan myth Spitiiura sawed Yima in half (*Yt.* 19.46 *yimo.kərəṇtəm* "the Yima-cutter"), but the *Bundahišn* states that he did it together with Aži Dahāka (TD1, p. 196. 13-14; TD2, p. 228.12; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 292f.; tr. West, p. 131; see also Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* III,

p. 629 n. 76). According to the *Pahlavi Rivayat* (46.35, p. 136), it was as a recompense (*pāddāšn*) for his success against Dahāg that Ādur Farnbag was established victoriously in Ḵᵛārazm, and the *Bundahišn* says that when Jam was cut in half, the *xwarrah* of Jam saved Ādur Farnbag from the hand of Dahāg (TD1, p. 102. 15-17; TD2, pp. 124.14-125.1; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 158f.; tr. West, p. 63).

In the Avesta (*Yt*. 5.29-35 and 15.19-21) we are told that Aži Dahāka worshipped Arduuī Sūrā in the land of Baβri and Vaiiu in the inaccessible (*dužita*) Kuuiriṇta. The tradition has interpreted Baβri as Babylon, Old Persian Bab(a)iruš (Mid. Pers. Bābēl) and Kuuiriṇta as Aži Dahāka's castle in Babylon. The *Bundahišn*, in a list of dwellings (*mānīhā*) made by the *kay*s, reports that Dahāg made a dwelling in Babel called Kuling *dušdīd* (TD1, p. 179.11-12; TD2, p. 209.8; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 268f.; see further Darmesteter, *Zend Avesta* II, pp. 584f. n. 16). In the *Dēnkard* (7.4.72) it is told that Dahāg by sorcery had made many wonderful things (*widimās*) in Bābēl, which induced people to idolatry, in order to destroy the world but that Zardošt recited the words of the Religion and thus rendered nought Dahāg's efforts (Dresden p. 119 [54]; Madan, p. 639.5-10; Molé, *La légende*, pp. 56f.). These interpretations are of doubtful historical and geographical value, not least because of the Avestan form of the name, Baβri, which differs from the others; nevertheless it is understandable that the Iranians, after they came into contact with Near-Eastern, especially Semitic culture, located Aži Dahāka, the big dragon, in Babylon, which must have been notorious for its dragons, in literature and artistic representations. Another mansion was constructed by Dahāg in *Šambarān (wr. *yʾmblʾn*; cf. *Šāh-nāma* Šambarān) and one in India (TD1 , p. 179.15; TD2, p. 209. 11-12; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 270f.). Only once, it seems, is Dahāg associated with a river, namely in the chapter on rivers in the *Bundahišn* where he is said to have asked a favor from Ahriman and the demons by the river Sped in Azerbaijan (TD1, p.82.15-17; TD2, p. 88.3; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 108f.; tr. West, p. 80).

Aži Dahāka's prayer to Arduuī Sūrā and Vaiiu was for them to give him the power to render unpopulated (*amašiia-*) the seven climes, i.e., the entire world; Arduuī Sūrā and Vaiiu of course did not grant this prayer; on the contrary, when Θraētaona subsequently worshipped them, asking them to grant him the power to overcome Aži Dahāka, it was him they granted his wish. The same two passages contain another fragment of the myth: At the same time, Θraētaona asked and was granted the power to lead away Sauuaṛŋhauuāci and Arənauuāci, the two most beautiful women in the world, whom the later tradition represented as Yima's sisters or daughters and as having been captured and detained by Aži Dahāka (further on the capture of beautiful women by dragons, see AŽDAHĀ II). More information originally contained in the Avesta is to be found in the later Pahlavi texts, especially in the resumés of the *nask*s given in the *Dēnkard* (books 8 and 9, tr. West, SBE 37, and elsewhere); in particular, the twentieth *fragard* of the *Sūdgar nask*, called *Vohuxšaθrəm*, was devoted in its entirety to the rule of Dahāg.

In the Pahlavi texts Dahāg is portrayed as the embodiment and originator of the bad religion, i.e., the opposite of the Good Mazdayasnian Religion. In *Dēnkard* 3.229 we are told that the bad religion and the non-law was codified by Dahāg in the writings of Judaism (the *ʾwlytʾ*, Syriac *Urāyθā*, i.e., the *Pentateuch*), and that from Dahāg it went to Abraham, the *dastūr* of the Jews (tr. Menasce, p. 243; cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 30). In the *Sūdgar nask* Dahāg was said to have possessed five defects (greediness, want of energy, indolence, defilement, and illicit intercourse), the opposites of the best qualities wisdom, instructed eloquence, diligence, and energetic effort (according to the resumé in *Dēnkard* 9.5.1-2, DH, p.172.8-9; Madan, p. 789. 1518; tr. West, p. 177). In *Dēnkard* 3.308 Dahāg, destroyer of the world is said to have been of Arabic (*tāj*) race. *Dēnkard* 3.287-88 lists ten good counsels to mankind given by Jam followed by ten bad, counter-counsels by Dahāg, which are referred to also elsewhere in the *Dēnkard* (tr. Menasce, pp. 243, 283-85; the *ʿOlamāʾ-e eslām* contains a note that the name Dahāk actually means "ten sins," see *Persian Rivayat*, p. 454, and

Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 413). In the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* (71) Dahāg is said to have been one of the seven worst sinners ever, i.e., those who are close to Ahriman himself (two more being the Az ī Srūwar and Dahāg's mother Wadag); here Dahāg is said to be the first who lauded (*stāyīd*) sorcery (*jādūgīh*) (cf. also *Dēnkard* 8.35.13 and 9.10.2-3; tr. West, pp. 111, 185). He is often referred to as Bēwarasp in the Pahlavi texts (e.g., *Dēnkard* 9.21.7; tr. West, p. 214; *Mēnōg ī xrad* 7.29, 26.34, 35, 38; tr. West, pp. 35, 60f.; *Bundahišn* TD1, p. 66.7-8; TD2, p. 80.6-7; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 98f.; tr. West, p. 40).

A curious note is found in *Mēnōg ī xrad*, chap. 27, in which the sage asks about the benefit of all the ancient rulers. About Azdahāg the *Mēnōg ī xrad* says that the advantage (*sūd*) of Azdahāg Bēwarasp and Frāsyāg the Turanian was that if they had not received the rule it would have gone to Xešm (wrath) and then it could not have been taken from him till the end of the world because Xešm has no bodily existence.

The Pahlavi texts moreover provide Dahāg with a mother, who is the embodiment of evil and sinfulness and is one of the seven worst sinners ever (see *Dādestān ī dēnīg* 71, 77). Her name is variously given as Ōdag, Wadag, etc. She was the first to have practiced whoredom (*rōspīgīh*) and incestuous adultery, having intercourse with her son while her husband Arwadasp/Urwadasp (or Xrūdasp as West, tr., *Bundahišn*, p. 131?) was still alive, and without his sanction (*adastūrīhā*) and unlawfully (*adādestānīha*) (TD1, p. 196.17-197.3; TD2, pp. 228.15-229.4; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 292f.; tr. West, pp. 131f.). (In the same vein one might expect Dahāg to have instituted the heinous sin of sodomy, but that had of course already been done by Ahriman, when he performed it on himself to create "demons and lies and other abortions," see *Mēnōg ī xrad* 7.10, tr. West, pp. 32f.; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 368f.) She is described in some detail in *Dēnkard* 9.21.4-5, which seems to allude to some relationship between her and Jamšēd (DH, p. 188.18-21; Dresden, p. 58 [175]; Madan, p. 810.19ff.; tr. West, pp. 212-13 n. 5). Being the most sinful of females, by one commentator of *Vd*. 18.30 Ōda is identified with the *druj* that tells Srōš who are the four males who make her pregnant. However, this is probably a late interpretation since the summary of *Vd*. 18 in the *Dēnkard* has only *druz* (see Darmesteter, *Zend-Avesta* II, pp. 248f. and n. 43) in *Vd*. 19.6, Aŋra Mainiiu promises Zaraθuštra a boon such as the one the ruler (*daiiŋ´hupaiti*) Vaδaγana got, if he forswears the Mazdayasnian religion. The passage is found also in *Mēnōg ī xrad* where Wadagān *dahibed* is glossed by Dahāg (56.24-25, pp. 154f.; tr. West, p. 103 with n. 3). This means that the tradition took Av. *vaδaγana* to be a matronymic referring to Aži Dahāka, and it is possible, of course, that the whole character of Wadag/Ōda is built upon this interpretation.

The rule of Aži Dahāka. From the Pahlavi texts onwards, Dahāg is inserted into the list of mythical Pīšdādīān (Pēšdādīān) rulers of Iran, i.e., the rulers descended from Hōšang ī Pēš-dād (Haošiianŋha Paraδāta), succeeding Jam ī Xšēd (Yima Xšaēta) and preceding Frēdōn (Θraētaona). The Avesta does not say explicitly whether Dahāg was a king or not, but from the way he was mentioned among the early rulers of the Iranians, it was quite natural that he should be considered as such. An attempt was made by S. Wikander to trace the triple succession of Yima-Aži Dahāka-Θraētaona back to Indo-European patterns, comparing the Greek myth of the Ouranides, according to which Zeus conquered Kronos and the Titans and established a reign of order; however, Duchesne-Guillemin (*La religion*, pp. 336f. with references) has convincingly argued against such a connection, pointing out the differences between the Greek and Iranian myths and, most importantly, pointing out the fact that there is no trace of this kind of triple succession in India, which precludes an Indo-Iranian date for it. It seems better to assume that it is a post-Avestan creation, due to a certain interpretation of the Avestan texts.

In the Pahlavi texts the reign of terror of Dahāg is described in some detail (see, e.g., *Dēnkard* 9.21.12-16). His genealogy is given in the *Bundahišn* chap. 31.6, which traces it back to the Evil Spirit himself (TD1, pp. 196.17-197.3; TD2, pp. 228.15-229.4; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 292f.; tr. West, p. 131f.). About his rule we read in the *Bundahišn* that a hundred years after the *xwarrah* left Jam the millennium reign (*hazārag xwadāyīh*) came to Scorpio (Gazdumb) and then Dahāg ruled for a thousand years, until the millennium rule came to Sagittarius (Nēmasp) and the five hundred-year rule of Frēdōn (TD1, p. 206.1-2; TD2, p. 239.4-5; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 306f.; tr. West, p. 150; briefly mentioned in *Dēnkard* 3.329, Menasce, p. 308; *Mēnōg ī xrad* 57.25). In the *ʿOlamāʾ-e eslām* we are told that after Jamšēd became deranged, he was seized and slewn by the Arab Dahāk who made himself king and reigned a thousand years, mixing men and demons, and working much sorcery, until Ferēdūn, son of Ātfī, came and bound him (*Persian Rivayat*, p. 454; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 413).

Aži Dahāka and Θraētaona. The Avesta contains several references to Θraētaona's victory over Aži Dahāka (*Y.* 9.8, *Yt*. 5.29-35, 14.40, 15.23-25, 19.37, 92, *Vd*. 1.17), but there is little detail, except in the case of his liberating Arənauuāci and Sauuaŋhauuāci. The Pahlavi texts contain some further details: In the *Dēnkard* (7. 1.25-26) we are told that by the power of the *xwarrah*, which came to him while he was still in the womb of his mother, Frēdōn was able at the age of nine to go forth and vanquish Dahāg and to deliver Xwanirah from the ravages of the lands (*dehān*) of Māzandarān (Dresden, p. 359; Madan, p. 596.2-12; tr. Molé, p. 9; see also *Dēnkard* 9.21.17-24, DH, pp. 190.8-191.21; Dresden, pp. 55-57 [178-82]; Madan, pp. 812.19-815.1; tr. West, pp. 217ff.). The *Dēnkard* (9.21.8-10) relates how Frēdōn first struck Dahāg with his club upon the shoulder (*frēg*), the heart, and the skull, without killing him, and that he then hewed him with a sword three times, which caused the body of Dahāg to turn into (*gaštan*) various noxious creatures. Seeing this Ohrmazd told Frēdōn not to cut Dahāg so that the world should not become flooded with reptiles and other noxious creatures (DH, p. 189.8-14; Dresden, p. 58 [176-77]; Madan, p. 811.13-21; tr. West, p. 214). This curious episode is hard to explain, but one is reminded of cosmogonical myths in which a giant is partitioned to give rise to the various elements of the world, as the Indian primeval Man, Puruṣa. Maybe the episode reflects some early element of the story of the creation by the Evil Spirit.

But most importantly the Pahlavi texts attribute to Aži Dahāka and Frēdōn/Kərəsāspa an eschatological role: Aži Dahāka is not killed by Frēdōn, but captured and chained "with awful fetters, in the most grievous punishment of confinement" at Mount Demāvand (*Dēnkard* 9.21.10, tr. West, p. 214; see also, e.g., *Bundahišn* TD1, p. 66.7-9; TD2, p. 80.6-7; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 98f.; tr. West, p. 40; *Mēnōg ī xrad* 26.38; tr. West, p. 61). At the beginning of the millennium of Ušēdarmāh, the *druz* of the seed of dragons (*az-tōhmag*) will be destroyed. Aži Dahāka breaks loose from the fetters and rushes out to terrorize the world, devouring one third of men, oxen, sheep, and other creatures of Ohrmazd, and smiting the water, the fire, and the plants. The last three then request from Ohrmazd that Frēdōn should be resuscitated to combat him. In the event, however, it is not Frēdōn but Kirsāsp (in the texts variously called Sām or son of Sām) who is reawakened and kills the dragon. The reason for this is not clear though it may be connected with the statement (see above) found in the Pahlavi texts that Ohrmazd refused Frēdōn permission to slay Dahāg because as a result the earth would have been flooded with noxious creatures (*xrafstar*). (See *Bundahišn* TD1, pp. 188.12-189.1; TD2, pp. 219.14-220.5; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 180-83; tr. West, p. 119; and see also, e.g., *Bahman yašt*, p. 128; *Dēnkard* 6.B4 [ed. Shaked, pp. 134f.], 9.15.2; *Šāyest nē šāyest* 20.18, ed. Kotwal, pp. 87f.; A. Christensen, *Démonologie*, pp. 20-25, 52). That this role was early assigned to Kirsāsp/Sām is clear from *Yt*. 13.61 and *Mēnōg ī xrad* 61.20-24 (tr. West, p. 110), where it is told that the body of Sām is protected by 99,999 *fravaši*s of the righteous so that demons and fiends may not harm it.

The legend of Kərəsāspa/Kirsāsp. Kərəsāspa's slayings of the Aži Sruuara and the Gandarəβa are only alluded to in the Avesta itself, but elaborated in the later Pahlavi writings. His slaying of Dahāg is recounted only in the Pahlavi and later texts. The Pahlavi texts contain two versions of the legend of Kirsāsp (spelled *krssp*; also Krišāsp, Grišāsp spelled *klyšsp*, *glyš(ʾ)sp*), one in the 14th, *fragard* of the *Sūdgar nask* as retold in the *Dēnkard* (DH, pp. 182.7-83.2 [*klsʾsp. glsʾsp*]; Dresden, pp. 65-66 [*klyšʾsp*]; Madan, pp. 802.14-803.12; tr. West, 9.15, pp. 196-99), another in the *Pahlavi Rivayat* (ed. Dhabhar, pp. 65-74). Both accounts were edited and translated by Nyberg, "La légende."

From the Avesta we only learn that Kərəsāspa for some reason or other had settled upon the back of the dragon—presumably thinking it to be a hill—to cook his midday meal (*Y*. 9.1, *Yt*. 19.40) and that the heat from his fire made the dragon hot and sweaty and finally woke him up, whereupon he jumped up from underneath the cooking pot, scattering the boiling water, and frightening Kərəsāspa, who fled, but eventually slew the dragon. The account in the *Sūdgar* only states that Kirsāsp killed the horned dragon, but the one in the *Pahlavi Rivayat* adds a few details (this version is also found in *Dârâb Hormazyâr's Rivâyat*, p. 62, not translated in Unvala, *Persian Rivayat*): Kirsāsp tells Ohrmazd that there was a horned dragon (Pers. *aždahā-ī*), swallowing men and horses, which has teeth as large as his arm, ears as large as fourteen *nmt*'s, eyes as large as a chariot, and a horn as large as a *šʾk* (Pers. *haštād araš* "eighty ells"). He ran after it (*pad pušt hamē tazīd*; Pers. *bar pošt-e vey* "on its back") for half a day until he caught up with its head, struck his mace at its neck and killed it. The *Persian Rivayat* adds that when he looked into its mouth he saw men hanging from its teeth, a feature which the *Pahlavi Rivayat* reserves for Gandarəβa/Gandarw. Kirsāsp tells Ohrmazd that Gandarw, large enough to devour twelve provinces at once (and so tall that the sea reached him to the knee and his head reached the sun according to the *Persian Rivayat*), seized him by the beard and pulled him into the sea where they fought for nine days and nights, when Kirsāsp managed to seize him by the foot and promptly pulled off his skin from his feet to his head and used it to bind the monster, which he left to his friend Axrūrag to guard. Then, after eating fifteen horses, Kirsāsp fell asleep under a tree and Gandarw pulled Axrūrag and Kirsāsp's wife and parents into the sea. All the people came and roused him and he ran down to the sea taking a thousand strides in one. Arriving at the sea he delivered those abducted, seized Gandarw, and killed him. The eschatological role played by Kirsāsp is not mentioned in the *Pahlavi Rivayat* but the *Sūdgar* tells how, when Dahāg runs free of the fetters to destroy the world, he (i.e., Kirsāsp) is awakened (*hangēzīhēd*) to vanquish the powerful demon (*Dēnkard*, DH p. 182.16-18; Dresden, p. 65 [161]; Madan, p. 803.3-6; tr. West. pp. 198f.; see also Christensen, *Démonologie*, pp. 17f., 51).

Dragons in astrology. Zoroastrian and Manichean astrology know of several dragons or snake-like monsters. Gōčihr and Mūšparīg. In the *Bundahišn* the snake-like (*mār homānāg*) Gōčihr and Mūšparīg with the tail (*dumbōmand*) and wings (*parrwar*) are said to be the evil opponents of the sun, moon and stars. These two harmful beings were bound to the sun so as not to run free and cause harm (*Bundahišn* TD1, p. 43. 11-17; TD2, pp. 52.12-53, 13; cf. *Bundahišn* TD1, p. 159.12ff.; TD2, p. 188.4ff.; tr. Anklesaria, pp. 242f.; tr. West, pp. 113f; MacKenzie, "Zoroastrian Astrology," pp. 513, 516; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 159, 164). Both are probably derived from Avestan concepts: In the Avesta *gaociθra* is an epithet of the moon and Mūš Pairikā "the witch Mūš" is found in *Y*. 16.8, where she is mentioned in connection with Āzi, the demon of greed (see ĀZ) and the heretic (*aŝəmaoγa*).

In the Pahlavi cosmogony Gōčihr is described as "similar to a snake with the head in Gemini (*dō-pahikar*) and the tail in Centaurus (*Nēmasp*), so that at all times there are six constellations between its head and tail." It runs retrograde, so that every ten years the head and tail have changed place. It is said to be standing in the middle of the sky, an expression which may refer to the polar region of

the sky and so perhaps contain a reminiscence of the constellation Draco, which circles the pole (see MacKenzie, “Zoroastrian Astrology,” pp. 515f. with notes). In the *ʿOlamāʾ-e eslām* it is stated that the heaven of Gōčihr is below the heaven of the moon (Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 417; cf. *Persian Rivayat*, p. 429 bottom; see also *Škand-gumānīg wizār*, ed. Menasce, pp. 47, 55, 60).

At the end of time Gōčihr will fall down on the earth, which it will terrify like a wolf does a sheep; its fire and halo will then melt the metal of Šahrewar in the hills and mountains, thus providing the river of molten metal necessary for the purification of men. (Gōčihr appears to be the only fiery dragon in ancient Iran.) At the end, after Ohrmazd himself has come down to earth to send Āz and Ahriman back to the Darkness whence they had come, Gōčihr the serpent burns in the molten metal and the pollution of Hell burns and Hell becomes pure (*Bundahišn* TD1, pp. 193.11-16, 195.17-196.2; TD2, pp. 225.3-8, 227.12-15; tr. Anklesaria. pp. 288-91; tr. West, pp. 125f., 129).

Mūšparīg may originally have been considered the demon who causes the eclipses of the moon, as is indicated by its name Mūš meaning “mouse” but originally also probably “thief,” cf. OInd. *muṣ* “to steal” (see Darmesteter I, *Zend-Avesta*, pp. 144 n. 15).

In the Manichean cosmogony these two dragons are simply called “two dragons” (*dō azdahāg*); they were hung up (*āgust*) and fettered (*gišt*) in the lowest heaven and two angels (*frēstag*), male and female, were put in charge to make them revolve ceaselessly, i.e., presumably to make the firmament turn so as to keep the Manichean salvation machine going (Jackson, *Researches*, 30f., 31f.; Boyce, *Reader*, p. 60 text *y* 1 with note).

In later literature, the seven planets are sometimes called *aždahā* (see Eilers, *Sinn und Herkunft*, p. 11).

Dragons and dragon-like monsters in Manichean writings. The Manichean texts mention dragons in general terms (Mid. Pers. *azdahāg*, Parth. *aždahāg*) but they play no prominent role. Thus in *Mir. Man.* I (p. 22[194] = Boyce, *Reader*, p. 72 *y* 39) we read that the female and male *mazan*s (q.v.) and *āsrēštār*s copulate to produce dragon brats (*ʾwzdhʾg zhg*) and in *Mir. Man.* III (p. 30[875]) the Living Soul complains that it was seized and mangled by innumerable demons, including “dark, ugly, stinking, black dragons” (*tʾryg ʾjdhʾg dwrcyhr gndʾgʾwd syʾw*).

More important in Manichean cosmology is the class of demoniacal beings called *mazan*s. In the Zoroastrian writings these are clearly only “giants,” whom the ocean reaches to the knees. In the Manichean myths, however, they are definitely connected with the ocean and though most of them are indeterminate “giants” (e.g., the *mazan*s which usually accompany the *āsrēštār*s, some are sea dragons or dragon-like sea monsters (see below).

For the history of Iranian mythology, however, the most important fact is that the dragon-killing episode has been fitted into the Manichean cosmological scheme: Here we find the third son of the Living Spirit (Mihryazd), Adamas of Light (Syr. Adamos Nuhrā), being sent by his father (*Mir. Man.* I, p. 10[1 82], Boyce, *Reader*, p. 65 text *y* 14), to throw down the *mazan*, stretching it out from east to west, and putting his foot upon it so that it could do no harm, and, in another text (M 472v, Boyce, *Reader*, p. 80 text *z* 16), we are told that he suppressed (*nyrʾft*) the giant dragon (*azdahāg ī mazan*), which corresponds to “giant of the sea” (*mzṇʿy zrhyg*) in a Manichean Middle Persian text; this is the *gígas tēs thalássēs* in the *Kephalaia* (I, pp. 113ff.), which is responsible for ebb and flow (see Henning, “Book of the Giants,” p. 54 and n. 3, and cf. Boyce, *Reader*, pp. 6, 62 text *y* 5 with note; and Sundermann, *Parabelbuch*, pp. 21f. with n. 30). Adamas’s Iranian heritage is evident in his Sogdian name, Wšynyy Byyy (M 583 I r8 in Waldschmidt and Lentz, *Manichäische Dogmatik*, p. 68

[545], with comm. 88 [565], from **wṛθragna-*); whether this name implies that the Sogdians had preserved traditions of a demon-slaying Vərəθraγna or whether it is due to Indian influence, has not yet been investigated. The Greco-Syriac name Adamas/Adamos probably means “indomitable, adamant” (Cumont, “Adamas”). Augustine calls him “the belligerous indomitable hero (or “the hero Adamas”) who holds a spear in his right and a shield in his left” (*adamantem heroam belligerum*; *Contra Faustum* quoted by Cumont, p. 79). In the Chinese text edited by Waldschmidt (Waldschmidt and Lentz, pp. 9, 33 [486, 510]) he is called “the brave, strong, equipped with the ten powers, demon-subduing emissary.” This god is also called, for reasons as yet not understood, Wisbed Yazd (three other sons of the Living Spirit being the Dahibed, Zandbed, and Mānbed Yazds), and the god with four forms (*yazd ī taskirb*; see Sundermann, “The Five sons,” passim, and “Namen von Göttern,” pp. 101f., 127 n. 166, 131 n. 226). The *mazan* which he suppresses is that formed by that part of the ejected seed of the Archons which fell on the moist, and became a horrible monster (*Mir. Man*. I, p. 10 [182]; Syriac *hywtʾ snytʾ* “a terrible beast” in the likeness of the King of Darkness (see Theodore Bar Konay in Jackson, *Researches*, p. 247); note that Ebn al-Nadīm reports that the King of Darkness had “the head of a lion” and a “body like the body of a dragon (*tannīn*)” (*Fehrešt*, tr. Dodge, II, p. 778; Taqīzāda, *Mānī wa dīn-e ū*, p. 151 infra). In the Manichean Psalm-book (p. 138.41-42) it is stated explicitly that Adamas subdues the Hyle (i.e., Matter, in Iranian texts called Āz), and in the *Kephalaia* Adamas conquers a “sea giant” which had been formed out of those elements of the Darkness which were thrown into the sea by the Living Spirit and caused its saltiness and bitterness (*Kephalaia*, pp. 114-15). In another Middle Persian text concerning Adamas and his fight with this sea-monster, the monster is not named (Sundermann, *Kosmogoniche Texte*, pp. 47ff.).

The battle between a god and a sea monster is of course well known from the Babylonian creation myths (see e.g., the translation by Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, pp. 40ff.). In these the young god Marduk conquers Tiʾâmat, the primeval salt-water ocean personified (cf. the Manichean myth just quoted), by shooting an arrow into her mouth which she was unable to close because Marduk had let the evil wind loose into her face (cf. the Persian versions of the dragon-slaying described below in AŽDAHĀ II). It is also found in the Bible, where the Lord is described as having slain Leviathan, the serpent and the *tannīnīm* (crocodiles) in the sea (see, e.g., Heidel, op. cit., pp. 102ff.). With Hebrew *tannīnīm* compare Ebn al-Nadīm’s use of Ar. *tannīn* in his description of the Evil Spirit quoted above and note Middle Persian *TNYNA: possibly attested in *Dēnkard*, Madan, p. 816.13, and *Pahlavi Rivayat*, p. 22.10 (see Henning, “Two Manichean Magical Texts,” p. 42 and Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems*, pp. 29f., 2nd ed., p. xxxiii.)

Clearly a large number of elements from different sources, literary and oral, combined to form the various concepts of dragons. These elements and their various connections and interactions, especially those stemming from the Iranian and the Semitic traditions still have to be investigated in detail.

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ii. In Persian Literature

In Persian literature the *aždahā* (also *aždar*, *aždarha@*, *aždahāk*, in modern East-Iranian dialects also *aždār*, etc.) is pictured as a giant snake or lizard with wings.

Descriptions of dragons. The principal texts containing descriptions of *aždahā*s are *Sad dar-e naṯr and sad dar-e Bondaheš* (ed. B. N. Dhabhar, Bombay, 1909, p. 86: the legend of Garšāsp); *Šāh-nāma* ([Moscow], I, pp. 202-04, vv. 1016-22, 1029-31, 1034, 1051; II, p. 96 vv. 274-81; VI, pp. 40 v. 530, 174-75 vv. 133-34, 155, 158; VII, pp. 72-73 vv. 1195, 1214; IX, p. 145 v. 2287-88; XI, p. 149 v. 2360), Asadī Ṭūsī, *Garšāsp-nāma* (ed. Ḥ. Yaḡmāʾī, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975, p. 53 vv. 50, 60-62, 64-65, 67; p. 54 vv. 66, 68-72; p. 57 vv. 4-15, 20-22; p. 58 vv. 28-31, 33-35, 38; p. 59 v. 43; p. 165 vv. 4, 6). In these texts the dragons are variously described: In the Persian epics it is sometimes described as a wolf, a tiger, *šīr-e kappī*, i.e., a sort of sphinx (combined lion and ape), or simply as a *patyāra* (maleficent creature), or a black cloud. In the epics it has one head and mouth, exhaling fire and smoke from its hellish mouth, and inhaling with enough force to suck in a horse and rider, or a crocodile from the water, or an eagle from the sky. In other texts, as in the Old and Middle Iranian

texts, it has several heads. (In a verse by Labībī quoted in M. Dabīrsīāqī, *Ganj-e bāz yāfta*, Tehran, 2535 = 1355 Š./1976, its seven heads represent the heavenly spheres and the universe.) The enormous size of the beast is described in the *Šāh-nāma* and the *Garšāsp-nāma*, with elements also found in the Avesta and the Pahlavi literature: It is big as a mountain. Its head resembles a thicket of hair and its bristles stretch down to the ground like nooses. It has two horns the size of the branch of a tree, ten *gaz* or eighty cubits long. Its eyes are the size of wagon wheels or like two tanks of blood. They shine from afar as brightly as stars at night, as two glittering diamonds, as two blazing torches, or as two mirrors held beneath the sun. It has two tusks, each the length of the hero's arm or of a stag's horns. Humans and animals hang from its teeth. When it sticks its long, black tongue out of its mouth it hangs down onto the road like a black tree. Its skin has scales like a fish, each as big as a shield. It has eight feet, though most often it drags itself over the ground, and when it moves it makes the valleys and plains tremble, and a river of yellow poison as deep as a spear flows from its tail and nose. Its color is variously described, e.g., as dark yellow or gray, black, blue. It can not be touched with water, fire, or any weapon. According to one legend it can even speak human language (*Šāh-nāma* 11, p. 96 vv. 274-81). Its lair, guarded day and night, is on a mountain (usually said to be near the sea, whence the *aždahā* itself originated) or rock the same color as its body and is shunned by all living things, animals and plants. The sources variously locate it on the Kašaf-rūd near Ṭūs, on Mount Šekāvand in Kabul, India, "Māzandarān," on Mount Saqīlā in the land of the Romans, Mount Zahāb in the Yaman, or in Ṭabarestān.

Àdahā in Persian legends. Several Iranian heroes battle and slay the dragons. This old literary theme, common to many civilizations and known from both Old Indian and Old Iranian, was elaborated in later times in the national legends on the basis of popular, in some instances perhaps pre-Avestan, legends of Ferēdūn and Garšāsp, and underwent changes due to new social and ideological conditions.

The legends know of a number of other dragon-slaying heroes other than Ferēdūn and Garšāsp, e.g., Sām (= Garšāsp), Rostam, Farāmarz, Borzū, Āḏar Barzīn, Šahrīār, Goštāsp, Esfandīār, Bahman, Alexander, Ardašīr, Bahrām Gōr, and Bahrām Čōbīn.

Ferēdūn. This is the great dragon-slayer in the Avesta, where he is said to have slain Aži Dahāka. In the national legends, however, Ferēdūn has lost the role of a dragon-slayer, no doubt because his opponent Żaḥḥāk was transformed more strongly into a pseudo-historical person, though he is still described as having two snakes growing from his shoulders, a reminiscence of his once reptilian body. In another legend Ferēdūn transforms himself into a dragon to test his sons (*Šāh-nāma* I, p. 256 l. 1; see further below).

Garšāsp and Sām. Unlike Ferēdūn, Garšāsp has retained his dragon-slaying role in the national legends, and the Avestan story of Kərəsāspa has left a trace in later traditions about Garšāsp in Bayhaqī (p. 666). In addition to the older legends, the *Garšāsp-nāma* relates that Garšāsp, at the age of fourteen, was requested by Żaḥḥāk to slay a dragon which had come out of the sea after a storm and made its abode on Mount Šekāvand. Garšāsp ate some *teryāk* (antidote) and set out to fight the dragon. In the fight he shot an arrow from a specially made bow at the dragon's throat, then thrust a spear into its mouth, and finally clubbed it to death. (The club is said to be carved in the shape of a dragon's head, ibid., p. 269 v. 10.) Thereafter Garšāsp lost his skin and consciousness for a while (cf. the similar episode of Sām in *Šāh-nāma* I, pp. 202-04, and see below, Borzū). When he regained his consciousness, he gave thanks to an angel. The dragon's carcass was carried to the city on twenty hitched wagons, and celebrations were held to mark the event. Garšāsp, now honored as *jahān-pahlavān* (chief hero), commemorated his feat by making a flag adorned with a

figure of the dragon in black and a pole tipped with a golden lion and a moon above it (*Garšāsp-nāma*, pp. 49-63). This flag afterwards passed to Garšāsp's descendants and was his family's coat of arms (cf. the flag of Rostam, also adorned with a dragon figure, in the *Šāh-nāma* II, p. 214 v. 566). The story is retold once (*Garšāsp-nāma*, p. 165). (A flag with a dragon emblem appears in a picture from the seventh or eighth century A.D. found in eastern Iran, see G. Widengren, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran*, pl. 13).

In the *Šāh-nāma* (I, p. 202 vv. 1015-51) Sām slays a dragon which has come out of the Kašaf-rūd. (The same feat is attributed to Rostam in the *Jahāngīr-nāma*, ms. Bibl. Nat., Supp. Pers. 498, fols. 62f.) Ebn Esfandīār (I, p. 89) has recorded a legend from Māzandarān in which Sām had slain a dragon there at a place called Kāva Kalāda near the sea. The dragon was fifty ells (*gaz*) long and was killed with a single blow of a specially made mace. The episode was put into Ṭabarī verse, a line of which has been preserved by Ebn Esfandīār (ibid.). (A picture of a dragon trying to coil its tail around the hero has been preserved, see Widengren, op. cit., pls. 11 and 12.)

Rostam. There are several legends about dragon-slaying by Rostam, the most famous ones being Rostam and the *babr-e bayān* and the third of Rostam's *haft-k̲ᵛān*. The legend of Rostam and the *babr-e bayān* is found in two versions in a manuscript of the *Šāh-nāma* in the British Museum (Or. 2926, fols. 112b-115a and 118b-122b) and is also current in Iranian oral folklore (A. Enjavī, *Mardom o Šāh-nāma*, Tehran, 1355 Š./1976, pp. 217f.) as well as among the Mandeans of Iraq (H. Petermann, *Reisen im Orient*, 2nd ed., Leipzig, 1965, II, pp. 107-08). The scene of the slaying of the *babr-e bayān* (*patyāra* in the variant story in the B.M. ms.) is in the far east—India in the *Šāh-nāma*, China in the Mandean legend—and Rostam is but a youngster (fourteen and twelve respectively). In both variants Rostam kills the dragon by making it swallow something (a ruse suggested to him by his mentor Gōdarz according to the *Šāh-nāma*, but by a demon captured by him in the Mandean legend): In the first *Šāh-nāma* story Rostam fills ox hides with quicklime and stones and carries them to the place where the dragon comes out of the sea once a week. The dragon swallows them and its stomach bursts. Rostam then has the dragon flayed and makes a coat from its hide called the *babr-e bayān*. In the variant story Rostam does not get into the box but has fastened poisoned blades on it which kill the dragon. Rostam then remains unconscious for two days and nights, but is guarded by his steed Rak̲š. On reviving he washes himself in a spring (cf. below, Borzū and Āḏar Barzīn). In the Mandean legend Rostam himself hides in a box, is swallowed by the dragon, and kills it from inside its belly. As a reward the king of China gives Rostam his daughter in marriage. (Cf. below, Farāmarz.)

The story in Rostam's *haft-k̲ᵛān* (*Šāh-nāma* II, p. 94 vv. 345ff.) differs. This dragon lives underground on the road to Māzandarān (= India) and Rostam unwittingly enters the dragon's territory. The (talking) dragon attacks him while asleep but Rak̲š wakes him and helps him overcome the beast.

Farāmarz. One of the most widely disseminated dragon-slaying stories in Persian tells how Rostam's son Farāmarz with the help of Bīžan slew a dragon called the *mār-e jowšā* (the hissing serpent), which dwelt on a granite mountain in India, by hiding in two boxes and letting themselves be swallowed by the dragon. Beforehand they took doses of *teryāk* against its poison and stuck ambergris and musk up their noses against the stench (*Farāmarz-nāma*, ms. B.M., Or. 2946, fols. 24f.; see also Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Farāmarz-nāma," *Iran Nameh* 1/1, Washington, D.C., 1361 Š./1982, pp. 22-45).

Borzū, son of Sohrāb. Seeking the hand of the daughter of the king of Yaman, Borzū was required to slay the dragon on Mount Zahāb. He drank *teryāk* and milk against the poison (cf. above, Garšāsp and Farāmarz), went to the dragon's lair, hurled into its mouth an iron ball which choked it, shot arrows into its eyes and blinded it, and clubbed it on the head and killed it. Borzū's armor then cracked and fell off and he lost consciousness (cf. above, Garšāsp). Reviving he washed himself at a spring (cf. above, Rostam, and below, Āḏar Barzīn). The people celebrated this day in the same way as the new year (*Borzū-nāma*, ms. Bib. Nat., Supp. Pers. 1023, fols. 242f.).

Āḏar Barzīn, son of Farāmarz. Looking for a black cloud which came out of a mountain every year in spring and forced the daughter of the local ruler, Bēvarasp, to have intercourse, Āḏar Barzīn found that the cloud was a dragon and slew it with arrows. He then washed at a spring (*Bahman-nāma*, B.M. Or. 2780, fols. 180f.; cf. above, Rostam, Borzū).

Šahrīār, grandson of Rostam. This is another dragon-slayer (*Šahrīar-nāma*, ed. Ḡ.-Ḥ. Bīgdelī, Tehran. 1358 Š./1979, pp. 96f.).

Goštāsp. According to the *Šāh-nāma* (VI, pp. 26 v. 292, 36 vv. 461ff.), while living incognito in the land of the Romans, Goštāsp slew a wolf with the features of a dragon and later a dragon at the requests of the heroes Mīrān and Ahran who both wished to marry the Caesar's daughter.

Esfandīār. In the third of his seven exploits on his journey to rescue his sisters from Arjāsp's prison Esfandīār slew a dragon by means of the box ruse, then became unconscious and on reviving washed himself (*Šāh-nāma* VI, p. 173 vv. 126f.; cf. above, Rostam, Borzū, and Āḏar Barzīn).

Bahman son of Esfandīār. According to the *Bahman-nāma* (B.M. ms. Or. 2780, fols. 186f.), a dragon named Abr-e Sīāh (Black cloud) swallowed Bahman while he was out hunting. The defeat of the hero may symbolize the loss of the crown of an Iranian king to a foreign invader, perhaps Alexander.

Alexander. In the *Šāh-nāma* (VII, p. 71 vv. 1190f.) it is told that Alexander killed a dragon on a mountain by feeding the dragon five ox-hides stuffed with poison and naphtha, but with quicklime, bitumen, lead, and sulphur according to the Syriac Alexander romance. Th. Nöldeke, in his study of the Alexander romance noted the similarity of the Syriac version to the story of Daniel's slaying a dragon with balls of bitumen, dough, and hair, and to the killing of the snake-king Sapor (Šāpūr II, r. 309-79?) through use of camel hides stuffed with straw and charcoal (Jerusalem Talmud, Ned. 3.2; "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alexanderromans," in *Denkschriften d. Königlichen Akad. d. Wiss.*, Phil.-hist. Kl., 38, Vienna, 1890, pp. 22, 25).

Of the Sasanian kings Ardašīr and Bahrām Ḡor slew dragons: Ardašīr (r. 226-41) slew a worm (*kerm*) who protected the owner Haftvād of the castle Kojāran on the Persian Gulf coast, by pouring molten zinc and lead into its mouth (*Kār-nāmag* 7, *Šāh-nāma* VII, pp. 139ff.). Bahrām V Ḡor (r. 420-38) on his journey to India as the royal envoy slew a dragon on the seashore (*Šāh-nāma* VII, p. 464 vv. 2111f.) and was given permission to marry one of the Indian king's three daughters. In addition, Bahrām Čōbīn, the Sasanian general and claimant to the throne slew a dragon in Turkistan, which had swallowed the daughter of the ḵāqān and which would become invulnerable if it went to a certain spring and wetted its hair (*Šāh-nāma* IX, p. 145 vv. 2285ff.).

Symbolism of the dragon-slaying. The dragon in Iranian mythology is a destructive demoniacal force and a symbol of drought. Various theories about the dragon-slaying theme in both Indo-European and Indo-Iranian mythology have been advanced. One theory links the Indo-Iranian legends with solar and lunar eclipses and with lunar waxing and waning, which lay at the root of moon worship.

The popular explanation for these phenomena was that a dragon comes up from hell every month on the eastern side of the sky and swallows a piece of the moon's disc every night until the night comes when no part of the moon can be seen. Then the moon-god kills the dragon from inside its belly and triumphantly reemerges. In later times, however, the sun took over the moon's role in the celestial combats, and it was the sun which slew the dragon and rescued the moon from the dragon's belly twelve times every year. Later still the celestial combats were brought down to earth. The sun-god or god of light was replaced by a hero, and the belief in the dragon's swallowing of the moon was transformed into the myth of the dragon's swallowing of a maiden (for detailed discussion see Stiecke, *Drachenkämpfe*; Hüsing, *Iranische Überlieferung and Krsaaspa*).

In the Persian epics there is no hint of a belief in entry of the moon or sun into a dragon's belly, but in legends and certain poems, particularly those of Neẓāmī, a few vestiges can be traced (see A. Moṣaffā, *Farhang-e eṣṭelāḥāt-e nojūmī*, Tabrīz, 1357 Š./1978, pp. 36, 693; also Faḵr-al-dīn Gorgānī, *Vīs o Ramīn*, pp. 180 v. 8, 265 v. 115). In Iran people imagined eclipses to be swallowings of the sun or the moon by a dragon, and they therefore went up onto the flat roofs of their houses at those times and thumped their washtubs in prayer for the sun's or moon's release (Moṣaffā, op. cit., p. 693).

Another interpretation of the dragon-slaying by Indo-Iranian gods is that the god in question was a god of thunder and lightning, that the dragon was a black cloud, and that by slaying the dragon, the god released water impounded in its stomach to fall as rain.

In the Iranian texts there is no direct reference to drought, but all the Persian tales describe the country for many parasangs around the dragon's lair as an arid, burning desert devoid of humans, animals, and plants. At the same time, these legends are silent on the subject of rainfall after the slaying of the dragon and release of water [which the dragon had impounded], but in all the stories the dragon's lair is close to either a spring or the sea, and in most of them, a woman plays a part. It would appear that the woman in the Iranian legends has replaced water and rain as the symbol of fertility and life. The theme of the feast held after the victory over the dragon—note especially the feast of Mehragān held after Ferēdūn's victory over Żaḥḥāk (*Šāh-nāma* I, p. 79, 1.1)—can be traced to the legend of the slaying of a dragon by the god Mehr (Mithras), though no clear and direct link between the ritual and worship and the theme of dragon-slaying has been found.

Structural changes. The main novelty of the Iranian legends is the introduction of the theme of "the maiden and the dragon," in which the dragon becomes a historical person, sometimes a foreign usurper such as Żaḥḥāk, sometimes simply a foreign enemy such as Arjāsp in the story in the seven labors of Esfandīār; (The story of Ṭāʾer and Māleka in the *Šāh-nāma* (VII, p. 220, vv. 26ff.) may be another example, see ʿA. Zaryāb Ḵūyī, "Afsāna-ye fatḥ al-ḥażar," in *Šāh-nāma-šenāsī*, Tehran, 1356 Š./1977, pp. 187-201). The kidnapped maiden always disappears and the hero, after slaying the dragon, is rewarded with marriage to another maiden, with no connection with the dragon. It appears that, as the mythology of dragon-slaying evolved, the maiden was removed from the dragon's belly in order to make the story more realistic and so it became necessary to invent a reason other than rescue of the maiden for the hero's entry into the dragon's belly, namely the invulnerability of the dragon's hide. Because of this, the hero's attacks are always aimed either at the inside of its stomach or at its mouth, eyes, or skull. He has to kill the dragon from within himself, or, in a later development, kill the dragon by feeding it skins stuffed with deadly substances. The pouring of molten lead into the dragon's mouth concurs with Iranian notions about execution of demoniacal beings in the next world by means of molten metal (this may well have been a method of torturing and killing enemies in use among the Iranians themselves, see Wikander, *Männerbund*,

pp. 106f.). Against this, Christensen (*Iran Sass*., p. 96) derives the story of Ardašīr's dragon-slaying from the legend of the Babylonians' god, Marduk, who called up a terrible wind which entered the mouth of Tiʾâmat and killed her. In the Avestan account of Garšāsp's dragon-slaying, a long time has to elapse before the fire's heat begins to affect the dragon's hide. This suggests that belief in the invulnerability of dragon hide was a very old component of the myth.

After slaying the dragon, the hero makes a coat for himself out of its invulnerable hide. As already noted, in several stories the name of some other animal is applied to the dragon in order to give variety to the hero's exploits. In the story of the *babr-e bayān*, the tiger (*babr*) is either a dragon whose name has been changed or a beast which was originally a tiger but has been endowed with dragon-like features. The fact that Rostam's coat is also called a leopard skin (*palangīna*) in the *Šāh-nāma* (IV, p. 286 v. 1188) and in a Sogdian legend (E. Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens*, Paris, 1940, pp. 134-36) supports the interpretation of *babr* in *babr-e bayān* as "tiger." It may be significant that in Greek mythology, the lion which Hercules strangled (because its skin was invulnerable), and whose skin he thereafter wore (like Rostam's *babr-e bayān*) on his shoulders, is called the Nemean lion after the place (Nemea) which the lion had infested. In another surviving legend, the *babr-e bayān* is said to have been a coat sent from heaven (see AKVĀN-E DĪV).

When the dragon is presented as a historical person, the invulnerability of the dragon's hide is transformed into the impregnability of the enemy's castle, which the hero can only seize by stealth. Similarly in the Greek legend of Troy, Epeios, the designer of the wooden horse, plays the same part as the demon in the Mandean legend and as Gōdarz in the Iranian legend of the *babr-e bayān*. In some of the Iranian legends, however, the hero himself devises the ruse (story of the *patyāra* and elsewhere). Several different stratagems for the capture of the castle are mentioned, e.g., entry in the disguise of a merchant (cf. also the story of Esfandīār's capture of the castle of Rūʾīn Dež, *Šāh-nāma* VI, p. 192 vv. 452f.), seizure of the enemy's signet-ring (the story of Qāren's capture of the castle of the Ālān people, *Šāh-nāma*, p. 126 vv. 799f.), making the castle's guards drunk (cf. also Šāpūr and Ṭāʾer, *Šāh-nāma* V, 224 vv 81f.), etc. In legends where the dragon is presented as a historical person, the maiden is imprisoned by the enemy and set free by the hero, cf. Helen of Troy, Jamšīd's sisters in Ferēdūn's struggle against Żaḥḥāk, Esfandīār's sisters in the story of Esfandīār and Arjāsp, Māleka in the story of Ṭāʾer and Māleka.

The dragon-slaying legends in the Avesta by comparison with the Rigveda, have lost their mythico-religious importance. In the national legends this development is carried much further, to the point where the theme of dragon-slaying has nothing whatever to do with service to religion and becomes an instrument of royal or heroic ideology. Thus in the Iranian legends dragon-slaying comes first among the marvels and bold feats required as proofs of the king's or hero's legitimacy (Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Farāmarz-nāma*, p. 43 n. 23). In general it can be said that the dragon-slaying exploit of Ferēdūn is the model for kings and that of Garšāsp the model for heroes. The requirement that every king or hero should demonstrate the legitimacy of his status by slaying a dragon or doing some other fabulous deed or receiving miraculous aid prompted not only the tendency to historicize mythology but also a contrary tendency to mythologize history.

In the matter of royal ideology, special emphasis was laid on the king's legitimacy at times when his position was contested and insecure. This was the case in the reign of Ardašīr I (r. 241-66). After the overthrow of the long-established Parthian dynasty, the new regime's legitimacy had to be asserted, and this was done in various ways: notably by invention of the genealogy which makes Ardašīr a descendant of the Achaemenids (as in the *Šāh-nāma*, *Kār-nāmag*, and other sources), and by propagation of the stories about the worm (*kerm*); similarly in the case of Bahrām Čōbīn, the general

of Hormozd IV (r. 578-90) and rival of Ḵosrow II. According to the version in the *Šāh-nāma* (IX, p. 150 v. 2376), all the people with one voice acclaimed Bahrām as “Shah of Iran” after he had proved his legitimacy by slaying the *šīr-e kappī* in Turkistan. The same purpose is apparent in the stories about Bahrām V (r. 434-60), the renowned Bahrām Ḡor. From the accounts in the available sources, it is clear that the Iranians had greatly resented the conduct of his father, Yazdegerd I (399-420) and were unwilling, after the latter’s death, to acknowledge the succession of his son, Bahrām; they therefore made a certain Ḵosrow king for a while, until Bahrām recovered his crown and throne with the help of the ruler of Ḥīra. It was because of this situation that Bahrām’s legitimacy is so strongly and frequently stressed in stories of his exploits, including his slaying of dragons. In the case of Alexander, unlike the Zoroastrian priests who never acknowledged the Macedonian conqueror, the court historians attempted to justify Alexander’s rule in Iran with all sorts of arguments for his legitimacy. In the Alexander romance written by Pseudo-Callisthenes, many wondrous feats and bold deeds are ascribed to Alexander, such as going disguised as his own ambassador on a mission to Darius, making the ice break after crossing a river, seeing marvels, etc.; all stemmed from stories which the Iranians themselves had invented for the purpose of legitimizing Alexander. Later, when this romance was translated into Pahlavi, the translator saw fit to add two further themes, not present in the original but of great importance for Alexander’s legitimization in Iran: Alexander’s Iranian lineage and his slaying of a dragon.

One particularly interesting example of the importance of dragon mythology in assertion of royal legitimacy is the story in the *Šāh-nāma* (I, p. 256 vv. 1ff.) that Ferēdūn turned himself into a dragon and then barred the path of his sons in order to see how each would react. In this trial, the youngest son, Ēraj, comes out best because he chooses the middle road, halfway between hesitancy and impetuosity, the inhibitive element of earth and the stimulative element of fire being equally balanced in Ēraj’s constitution. Ferēdūn therefore judges him worthier than the other two, and in dividing the empire he allots its middle and best part, Iran, to Ēraj.

A recent psychoanalytic interpretation of the dragon-slaying theme, propounded by Otto Rank, a pupil of Sigmund Freud, deserves mention. Rank thinks that the entry of heroes into the belly of the dragon is a symbolic expression of the desire of sons to reenter the womb of the mother. Among other evidence for his theory he cites Iranian dragon-slaying legends.

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(Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh)

iii. In Iranian Folktales

The dragon is a well-attested motif in the lore of the Indo-European peoples (see Hartland; Róheim, 1912; Smith; Fontenrose; and Lutz). In Persian folklore, the dragon (*aždahā*) appears mostly in tales of magic and in legends. It is curiously missing in myths which are narratives concerned with creation (see Bascom). (In the following all motif numbers refer to Thompson, 1955).

The *aždahā* of the Persian folktales is a fantastic animal of serpentine variety, usually of enormous size (Thompson, B11.2.12; and see, e.g., Anjavī, 1975, p. 80; 1979, pp. 147, 205, 221, etc.), and fire-breathing (B11.2.11; Anjavī, 1979, p. 216; 1975, p. 170; 1984, p. 85, etc.), which resides in or near water (e.g., at the bottom of the sea; motif B11.3.1; in a lake: B11.3.1.1, etc.) Sometimes the *aždahā* resides in an underground cavern (B11.3.5; Anjavī, 1984, p. 85) or in a mountain (Anjavī, 1984, pp. 7, 199-200). It is endowed with powers of magical invisibility (B11.5.2; Anjavī, 1975, p. 80), and speech (N11.4.5; Anjavī, 1974, p. 17; 1979, pp. 20-23; Šakūrzāda, 1967, pp. 304-07; Behrangī, 1965, pp. 35-36). It usually guards a treasure (B11.6.2; Anjavī, 1974, pp. 252-54), or a magical tree or object (D950.0.1; H133.6; Anjavī, 1979, p. 205). In many folktales, it controls the water-supply of a town or a country (B11.7.1; Anjavī, 1974, p. 87; 1975, p. 139; 1979, pp. 147, 177; Eškevarī, 1973, pp. 101-05; Ṣobḥī, 1946, pp. 104-05; Behrangī, 1978, pp. 281-92) forcing the inhabitants to sacrifice a maiden or a princess, by offering her as food to the *aždahā* in order to find access to water.

The tale types 300-303 (Aarne and Thompson; Marzolph), i.e., “The dragon slayer,” which demonstrate the dragon-fight motif (B11.11ff.; see Róheim, 1940) are quite common in Persian folk narratives. In these tales the protagonist slays the *aždahā* in order to rescue the princess or maiden about to be sacrificed to the beast (R111.1.3). Such episodes may betray the sexual nature of the dragon-fight because from the standpoint of nutritive value, plump matrons would make more sense than fair maidens (Lutz, p. 208). In the course of the fight with the *aždahā*, the hero is sometimes overcome by the poisonous fumes of the slain beast’s venomous blood (B11.2.13.1; Anjavī, 1979, p. 147). *Àdahā* is often used as a metaphor for evil in folk legends (B11.9; Anjavī, 1975, p. 160). In these legends, the saint/hero metaphorically overcomes evil by slaying a dragon (cf. Saint George in Christian tradition; see Aufhauser and Panzer).

In some folktales, the *aždahā* appears as a grateful animal (B350). In a version of the tale type 1165, “The evil woman thrown into the pit” (Anjavī, 1979, pp. 20-23) for instance, an *aždahā* helps its rescuer to marry a princess. In another story, it devours threatening wild animals on behalf of the protagonist (Anjavī, 1974, p. 268). In a version of the tale type 563, “The table, the ass, and the

stick," the stick is magically turned into an *aždahā*, by the help of which the hero recovers his stolen magical objects (Anjavī, 1974, p. 299). Sometimes the grateful *aždahā* is itself the bestower of magical gifts (Anjavī, 1975, p. 362).

The most common allomotifs (see Dundes) for the *aždahā* in Persian folklore are snakes (Anjavī, 1975, pp. 360-66; 1979, pp. 7-23, 363), lions (Anjavī, 1974, p. 99), and fish (Anjavī, 1974, p. 180). Some folk legends in Iran speak of an aquatic beast which bears a feline name but also has all of the typical draconic features (cf. Omidsalar).

For collections of Persian folktales in western languages see Christensen, 1958; Elwell-Sutton, 1950; and Boulvin, 1975.

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(M. Omidsalar)

iv. Armenian Aždahak

Aždahak is the Armenian form, borrowed from Parthian (cf. Man. Parth. *ʾjdhʾg*), of the name of the Avestan demon Aži Dahāka, who in Iranian mythology is said to be chained in Mount Damāvand, from which he will burst forth at the end of days only to be slaughtered by the hero Θraētaona. In the *Šāh-nāma*, Żaḥḥāk (an arabicized form of the name) is depicted as a tyrannical foreign ruler of Iran of demonic aspect: serpents sprout from his shoulders. In Armenian mythology, King Artawazd is said to be imprisoned in Mt. Ararat, like Aži Dahāka in Damāvand (the comparison is drawn by the eleventh-century Armenian scholar Grigor Magistros, *Ṭʿłṭʿerə*, ed. Kostaneanceʿ, Alexandropol, 1910, letter 36). The Armenian historian Movsēs Xorenacʿi relates the same legend as the *Šāh-nāma*, apparently in a Northwest Iranian form (the name of Θraētaona, Mid. Pers. Frēdōn, is found as Hṙudēn), in an appendix to book 1 of his *History of Armenia*, but also identifies Aždahak (without the epithet *Biwrasp*, Pahl. *Bēwarasp* “with ten thousand horses” found in the *Bundahišn*) with Astyages, the king of the Medes against whom the Armenian Tigran rebelled.

In varying Armenian and Iranian applications, Aždahak is seen thus as the embodiment of foreign tyranny. He is also seen as a symbol of wickedness and heresy: Xorenacʿi condemns certain communistic practices of Biwrasp Aždahak; this is interpreted as a reference to the Mazdakite heresy (see N. Akinean, “Biwraspi Aždahak ew hamaynavarn Mazdak hay awandavēpi mēj əst Movsēs Xorenacʿway” [Biwrasp Aždahak and the communist Mazdak in the Armenian epic according to Movsēs Xorenacʿi], *Handēs Amsoreay*, Vienna, 50, 1936). In an anonymous southern Armenian chronicle dated to the 11th-12th centuries, Moḥammad is described as one possessed by demons and breaking free from confinement; the Arab prophet is shown as a heresiarch in terms reminiscent of Aždahak (see M. H. Darbinyan-Melikʿyan, ed., *Patmuṭʿiwn Ananun Zrucʿagri karcecʿeal Šapuh Bagratuni*, Erevan, 1971, pp. 40-43).

The depiction of Żaḥḥāk in manuscript illuminations of the *Šāh-nāma* conforms to the Avestan descriptions of the demon as *θrizafanəm θrikamərəδəm xšvašašīm* “three-mouthed, three-headed, six-eyed” (*Yt*. 9.8), but appears to derive from Mesopotamian iconography, as in the late representation of Nergal at Hatra. In Armenia, the fourth-century A.D. king Pap, who persecuted the Church and practiced sodomy, is described by the historian Pʿawstos Biwzand as having serpents springing from his breasts (*Patmuṭʿiwn Hayocʿ*, Erevan, 1968, 4.44, 5.22). A terra-cotta figurine in the Hermitage, probably made in Sogdia in the 7th-8th centuries A.D., shows a man, enthroned and wearing a jeweled tiara, with two snakes springing from his shoulders at the base of the neck (see N. V. D’yakonova, “Terrakotovaya figurka Zakhaka,” *Trudy otdela vostoka gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha* 3, 1940, pp. 195-205 fig. 1). In modern Armenia, the steles with snakes and other figures carved on them are called *višap* “dragon” by the Armenians, but *aždahā* by the Kurds.

In Zoroastrian thinking, temporal values of righteous kingship are closely bound to spiritual righteousness and the sovereignty of Ahura Mazdā; the development of the image of the demonic creature Aži Dahāka as the human Aždahak, a tyrant and heresiarch with visibly demonic attributes, is logical in a Zoroastrian framework.

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Aži Dahaka in Zoroastrian literature

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Azhi

Azhi Dahaka

Dahaka (Avestan Great Snake) is a dragon or demonic figure in the texts and mythology of Zoroastrian Persia, where he is one of the subordinates of Angra Mainyu. Alternate names include Azi Dahak, Dahaka, Dahak.



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Nature

Etymology

Zahhak or Zohhak is a figure of Persian mythology, evident in ancient Iranian folklore as Aži Dahaka, the name by which he also appears in the texts of the Avesta. In Middle Persian he is called Dahag or Bevar-Asp, the latter meaning "[he who has] 10,000 horses". Aži (nominative ažiš) is the Iranian Avestan word for "serpent" or "dragon". It is cognate to the Vedic Sanskrit word ahi, "snake", and without a sinister implication. Azi and Ahi are distantly related to Greek ophis, Latin anguis, both meaning "snake".

The meaning of dahaka is uncertain. Among the meanings suggested are "stinging" (source uncertain), "burning" (cf. Sanskrit dahana), "man" or "manlike" (cf. Khotanese daha), "huge" (cf. Pashto loy) or "foreign" (cf. the Scythian Dahae and the Vedic dasas).

Aži Dahaka is the source of the modern Persian word azhdaha or ezhdeha (Middle Persian Azdahag) meaning "dragon", often used of a dragon depicted upon a banner of war.

Origins

Azhi Dahaka was created by Angra Mainu (the son of Angra Mainu and Autak), or the Ultimate Evil, to oppose goodness and truth (Allan, et al., 1999). Literally made of the unclean khrafstra, animals such as snakes, toads, scorpions, frogs and lizards, this dragon embodied corruption.

Description/Morphology

In the Avesta, the Azhi Dahaka is described as a three-headed, six-eyed, dragon-like monster. He is said to have a thousand senses, and to bleed snakes, scorpions, and other venomous creatures. He also is said to bring or control storms and disease. His wings were said to be so enormous that they would block out the sun.

In the Shahnameh written around 1000 AD, Azhi Dahaka was semi-anthropomorphosized as Zahak or Zohak, though many of the older characteristics were retained in the new version.

Story

The dragon roamed through the universe until Angra Mainyu, perhaps regretting his decision to create such a monster, decided to end him. His champion Thraetaona or Feridun could not kill the dragon but chained him instead to Mount Damavand, where Dahak will have to remain for eternity. It is further prophesized that Azhi Dahaka will break free of this prison as part of the Zoroastrian apocalypse, and will kill one-third of humanity before finally being slain by Keresaspa.

History/Beliefs

Aži Dahaka is the most significant and long-lasting of the ažis of the Avesta, the earliest religious texts of Zoroastrianism. He is described as a monster with three mouths, six eyes, and three heads (presumably meaning three heads with one mouth and two eyes each), cunning, strong and demonic. But in other respects Aži Dahaka has human qualities, and is never a mere animal.

In a post-Avestan Zoroastrian text, the Denkard, Aži Dahaka is identified as an Arab, as the source of the writings of Judaism (in this context identified as a religion opposed to Zoroastrianism), and possessed of all possible sins and evil counsels, the opposite of the good king Jam. The name Dahag (Dahaka) is punningly interpreted as meaning "having ten (dah) sins". His mother is Wadag (or Odag), herself described as a great sinner, who committed incest with her son.

In the Avesta, Aži Dahaka is said to have lived in the inaccessible fortress of Kuuirinta in the land of Baßri, where he worshipped the yazatas Ar?dvi Sura (Anahita), divinity of the rivers, and Vayu, divinity of the storm-wind. Based on the similarity between Baßri and Old Persian Babiru (Babylon), later Zoroastrians localized Aži Dahaka in Mesopotamia, though the identification is open to doubt. Aži Dahaka asked these two yazatas for power to depopulate the world. Being representatives of the Good, they of course refused.

In one Avestan text, Aži Dahaka has a brother named Spitiyura. Together they attack the hero Yima (Jamshid) and cut him in half with a saw, but are then beaten back by the yazata Atar, the divine spirit of Fire.

According to the post-Avestan texts, following the death of Jam i Xšed (Jamshid), Dahag gained kingly rule. Another late Zoroastrian text, the Menog i xrad, says that this was ultimately good, because if Dahag had not become king, the rule would have been taken by the immortal demon Xešm, and so evil would have ruled upon earth until the end of the world.

Dahag is said to have ruled for a thousand years, starting from 100 years after Jam lost his royal glory (see Jamshid). He is described as a sorcerer who ruled with the aid of demons (divs).

The Avesta identifies the person who finally disposed of Aži Dahaka as Traetaona son of A?ßiya, in Middle Persian called Fredon. The Avesta has little to say about the nature of Traetaona's defeat of Aži Dahaka, other than that it enabled him to liberate Arənavāci and Savaŋhavāci, the two most beautiful women in the world. Later sources, especially the Denkard, provide more detail. Fredon is said to have been endowed with the divine radiance of kings (xvarrah, modern Persian farr) from birth, and was able to defeat Dahag at the age of nine, striking him on shoulder, heart and skull with a mace and giving him three wounds with a sword. However, when he did so, vermin (snakes, insects and the like) emerged from the wounds, and the god Ormazd told him not to kill Dahag, lest the world become infested with these creatures. Instead, Fredon chained Dahag up and imprisoned him on the mythical Mt. Damavand (later identified with Damavand, one of the high mountains of the Alborz chain).

Zahhak in the Shahnama

During the reign of Mahmud of Ghazni (AD 994-1030) the Shahnameh or "book of kings" was written by Firdowsi, who retold the tale with notable differences, including the anthropomorphisation of Azhi Dahaka into Zahak, a human king with snakes on his shoulders who feasted on human brains. As foretold in a vision years earlier, the tyrant king Zahak was eventually overthrown by the hero Faridun (Thraetaona), who imprisoned him on Mount Demavand's desolate slopes (Allan, et al., 1999).

In Firdowsi's Shahnameh, Alexander the Great is juxtaposed alongside young heroes such as Faridun, as an explorer who defeats and claims Iran (Allan, et al., 1999). Climbing to the top of a mountain guarded by a terrible dragon, perhaps Azhi Dahaka or Zahak, the explorer discovers the well-preserved body of a holy man. A voice informs him his time of death is upon him. At first, it would appear that such an unclimactic end for Alexander is reflected in the uselessness of the hero's plight, as Azhi Dahaka is destined to break free of his imprisonment for a final attempt at chaos, which will catalyse the apocalypse. However, the discovery of a holy man may be representative of the preservation of the hero spirit, as the great dragon is destined for defeat at the hands of Ahura Mazda's greatest warrior, Keresaspa or Kirsap (Allan, et al., 1999).

According to Ferdowsi, Zahhak was born as the son of an Arab ruler named Merdas. Because of his Arab origins, he is sometimes called Zahhak-e Tazi, "the Arabian Zahhak". He was handsome and clever, but had no stability of character and was easily influenced by evil counsellors. Ahriman therefore chose him as the tool for his plans for world domination.

When Zahhak was a young man, Ahriman first appeared to him as a glib, flattering companion, and by degrees convinced him that he ought to kill his own father and take over his territories. He taught him to dig a deep pit covered over with leaves in a place where Merdas was accustomed to walk; Merdas fell in and was killed. Zahhak thus became both parricide and king at the same time.

Ahriman now took another guise, and presented himself to Zahhak as a marvellous cook. After he had presented Zahhak with many days of sumptuous feasts, Zahhak was willing to give Ahriman whatever he wanted. Ahriman merely asked to kiss Zahhak on his two shoulders. Zahhak permitted this; but when Ahriman had touched his lips to Zahhak's shoulders, he immediately vanished. At

once, two black snakes grew out of Zahhak's shoulders. They could not be surgically removed, for as soon as one snake-head had been cut off, another took its place.

Ahriman now appeared to Zahhak in the form of a skilled physician. He counselled Zahhak that the only remedy was to let the snakes remain on his shoulders, and sate their hunger by supplying them with human brains for food every day otherwise the snakes will feed on his own.

About this time, Jamshid, who was then the ruler of the world, through his arrogance lost his divine right to rule. Zahhak presented himself as a savior to those discontented Iranians who wanted a new ruler (reflecting the embracing of the Arab religion and culture by Persians after the Arab conquest of Persia and the subsequent oppression persians faced).

Collecting a great army, he marched against Jamshid, who fled when he saw that he could not resist Zahhak. Zahhak hunted Jamshid for many years, and at last caught him and subjected him to a miserable death -- he had Jamshid sawn in half. Zahhak now became the ruler of the entire world. Among his slaves were two of Jamshid's daughters, Arnavaz and Shahrnavaz (the Avestan Ar?navaci and Sava?havaci).

Zahhak's two snake heads still craved human brains for food, so every day Zahhak's spies would seize two men, and execute them so their brains could feed the snakes. Two men, called Armayel and Garmayel, wanted to find a way to rescue people from being killed for the snakes. So they learned cookery and after mastering how to cook great meals, they went to Zahhak's palace and managed to become the chefs of the palace. Everyday they saved one of the two men and put the brain of a sheep instead of his into the food, but they could not save the lives of both men.

Zahhak's tyranny over the world lasted for centuries. But one day Zahhak had a terrible dream – he thought that three warriors were attacking him, and that the youngest knocked him down with his mace, tied him up, and dragged him off toward a tall mountain. When Zahhak woke he was in a panic. Following the counsel of Arnavaz, he summoned wise men and dream-readers to explain his dream. They were reluctant to say anything, but one finally said that it was a vision of the end of Zahhak's reign, that rebels would arise and dispossess Zahhak of his throne. He even named the man who would take Zahhak's place: Fereydun.

Zahhak now became obsessed with finding this "Fereydun" and destroying him, though he did not know where he lived or who his family was. His spies went everywhere looking for Fereydun, and finally heard that he was but a boy, being nourished on the milk of the marvelous cow Barmayeh. The spies traced Barmayeh to the highland meadows where it grazed, but Fereydun had already fled before them. They killed the cow, but had to return to Zahhak with their mission unfulfilled.

Zahhak now tried to consolidate his rule by coercing an assembly of the leading men of the kingdom into signing a document testifying to Zahhak's righteousness, so that no one could have any excuse for rebellion. One man spoke out against this charade, a blacksmith named Kava (Kaveh). Before the whole assembly, Kava told how Zahhak's minions had murdered seventeen of his eighteen sons so that Zahhak might feed his snakes' lust for human brains – the last son had been imprisoned, but still lived.

In front of the assembly Zahhak had to pretend to be merciful, and so released Kava's son. But when he tried to get Kava to sign the document attesting to Zahhak's justice, Kava tore up the document, left the court, and raised his blacksmith's apron as a standard of rebellion – the Kaviyani Banner, derafsh-e Kaviyani. He proclaimed himself in support of Fereydun as ruler.

Soon many people followed Kava to the Alborz mountains, where Fereydun was now living. He was now a young man and agreed to lead the people against Zahhak. He had a mace made for him with a head like that of an ox, and with his brothers and followers, went forth to fight against Zahhak. Zahhak had already left his capital, and it fell to Fereydun with small resistance. Fereydun freed all of Zahhak's prisoners, including Arnavaz and Shahrnavaz.

Kondrow, Zahhak's treasurer, pretended to submit to Fereydun, but when he had a chance he escaped to Zahhak and told him what had happened. Zahhak at first dismissed the matter, but when he heard that Fereydun had seated Jamshid's daughters on thrones beside him like his queens, he was incensed and immediately hastened back to his city to attack Fereydun.

When he got there, Zahhak found his capital held strongly against him, and his army was in peril from the defense of the city. Seeing that he could not reduce the city, he sneaked into his own palace as a spy, and attempted to assassinate Arnavaz and Shahrnavaz. Fereydun struck Zahhak down with his ox-headed mace, but did not kill him; on the advice of an angel, he bound Zahhak and imprisoned him in a cave underneath Mount Damavand, binding him with a lion's pelt tied to great nails fixed into the walls of the cavern, where he will remain until the end of the world. Thus, after a thousand years' tyranny, ended the reign of Zahhak.

This story is Ferdowsi's way of reconciling the descriptions of Dahag as a three-headed dragon monster and those stories which treat him as a human king. According to Ferdowsi, Zahhak is originally human, but through the magic of Ahriman he becomes a monster; he does, in fact, have three heads, the two snake heads and one human head; and the snakes remind us of his original character as a dragon.

The characterization of Zahhak as an Arab in part reflects the earlier association of Dahag with the Semitic peoples of Iraq, but probably also reflects the continued resentment of many Iranians at the 7th century Arab conquest of Persia.

Art / Fiction

Popular culture

- In the Prince of Persia video-game series from Ubisoft, the Dahaka appears as the monstrous guardian of chronal continuity, hunting down and killing anomalies in the timeline of history.
- In Ogre Battle 64: Person of Lordly Caliber for the Nintendo 64, the Azhi Dahaka is the green, scaley final form of the "earth" elemental dragons in the game.
- In the role playing game Vampire the Masquerade, certain members of the Tzimisce clan strive to become like Azhi Dahaka.
- In the TV series Xena, Warrior Princess and Hercules: The Legendary Journeys, the evil deity Dahak is based on Azhi Dahaka.
- He also appears on Lionheart: Legacy of the Crusader (game by Interplay,2003) as a guardian of his lair in the Fortress at Alamut.
- In the PlayStation 2 video game Final Fantasy X-2, three fiends called Azi Dahaka guard the direct routes to Vegnagun.
- In his Empire from Ashes-trilogy, David Weber wrote of an immense sentient starship by the name of Dahak, whose crest was a three-headed dragon.
- In Suikoden V, there is a massive ship named Dahak--given its 3 dragon figureheads, it's likely a reference to the aforementioned starship and to Azhi Dahaka. There is also a Queen's

Knight named Zahhak.

- In the third book of the roleplaying series "Blood Sword", the player will face three simulacrums of ancient gods. Azidahaka was described as a serpentine creature with three human heads.
- One of the most well known monsters in the Godzilla series, King Ghidorah, seems to be based on Ahzi Dahaka. Both are three headed dragons, and King Ghidorah is sometimes referred to as "The King of Terror."
- In the Korean RPG game The War of Genesis III, a section of the protagonists ride flying dragons with large repeating guns mounted on their undersides. These flying creatures are referred to as Azhi Dahaka. The image is somewhat similar to a pterodactyl in the game, and it is referred to as being "extremely difficult to control."
- The Azhi Dahaka are also a fictional race of immortals featured in "The Everlasting", a series of Role Playing Game books published originally by Visionary Entertainment. In this context, the name refers to a supernatural creature that has stolen and consumed the soul of at least one dragon.
- Azhi Dahaka is a class of Dragon in the game Disgaea: Hour of Darkness.
- In the Playstation game Dragon Valor Azi Dahaka is the final dragon boss, and the ruler of all dragons.
- In the MMORPG Final Fantasy XI, 'Zahak' is referenced as the founder of the Empire of Aht Urhgan. Players who become Blue Mages also receive the 'Mark of Zahak'. The setting of the Treasures of Aht Urhgan expansion also draws heavily on Persia and its mythology. [[Category:Continent: Asia]

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http://aztecamemoria.tumblr.com/post/139162358742/i-revised-my-original-post-on



I revised my original post on brujeria/nahualli. Original post is here. Warning, long read. Nahualli & Aztec witchcraftA "Witch" is usually defined as a person, usually female, who only uses magick to harm in the older Mexican traditions. Amongst the...

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Nahualli & Aztec witchcraft

A "Witch" is usually defined as a person, usually female, who only uses magick to harm in the older Mexican traditions. Amongst the Otomi people, for example, it is thought that you should do your best not to influence people too negatively or in any negative manner. This is because you may attract the attention of a Witch, who could be offended. You are to blend in with everyone, so to speak. Although this attitude is changing in modern times. Brujeria [Spanish for Witchcraft.] is being more embraced. (It may be the influence of more modern traditions such as Wicca.) Most people use magick to cure, but also use Witchcraft and curing practices. These people are usually identified as "curers" [curandero] and their practice is passed down to apprentices. It's lineage based a majority of the time, similar to Gardernarian Wicca.

They are more common all over Central America now. Their practices may differ from area to area.(Not too dramatically though.) They're usually found in more rural areas where Catholicism did not quite take the hold that it did in bigger cities. (Their beliefs are less "Christianized" than ones in cities.) They tend to be more superstitious in these types of areas, maybe because of isolation. Practices and beliefs have the added the traditions of Catholicism mixed in with Pre-Colombian beliefs of Natives, such as the Aztecs and Mayans. This happens mostly in rural Mexico. The Aztec religion technically, still "lives" because of these practices.

Many times Brujas or Brujos are employed for the magickal prowess. (Brujas is the feminine term for Witch, while Brujo is the masculine term.) They can be employed for curses and curing. However, curing is the most common request of magickal practices there. The curandero will do anything from removing the evil eye, to cleansings, to healing ailments, and giving out herbal remedies. (When scientifically tested, it was found that traditional Aztec medicine was up to 60% effective in treating patients, which was a high rate for people without modern technology.) They might even remove curses cast by enemies or perform exorcisms.

Modern Aztecs still honor the old spirits that dwell in those places. (Animal spirits, earth spirits, spirits of the air, etc.) The curandero or Bruja can act as though they are a shaman at times, that is a part-time magick user and part-time priest. (This is pretty close to how people used to be in the old ways, before civilization.) Their prayers also honor the earth, heavens, and underworld. They usually build their altars with the representation of these layers. (Animism is a concept, that everything has a spirit. Even inanimate objects. This is useful in incantations where you state your intention and will. Its how you make objects yours and how you direct their energy, as well as purifying. Animism is inherent in all Mesoamerican beliefs. Even the modern ones are still popular like this.)

To Mesoamericans and modern Mexicans reality is an appearance. Any sorcerer/Witch/skilled magick user knows that there is layers of reality under this one. That's why there is 9 layers of the underworld and 13 layers of the heavens. While the main cosmos is consisted of earth, heaven, and the underworld. [Earth is middle, underworld below, and heaven above.] Most of magick in Mexico and Pre-Colombia Mexico used the practice called dream working. Where you use your dreams to manipulate reality, gather information, or cure someone and so forth.

The appearance of reality, layers of realities with in reality, is perhaps a very important part of magickal practice. Trickery and illusions in Mesoamerican magick is very much used and valued. The god of sorcerers himself,

Tezcatlipoca, also known as San Simon or Maximon to modern Natives, often used trickery, which included appearance based magick to get what he wanted. [His nahualli is also a legendary jaguar.] These types of things are a good skill to learn if one travels to the otherworld or underworld, as one would encounter demons and spirits with ulterior motives. Also, stealth is a skill to be acquired so that one would not be seen by beings that might harm one.

Rituals may take place in the waking world, while the rest takes place in the other one, the realm of dreams, where the sorcerer or curer can travel to the underworld if needed. Caves, mirrors, and water are thought to be portals in this otherworld. (Any reflective surfaces count or places underground.) If one can't travel to the underworld or otherworld in dreams, one would do a ritual in a cave or the cave's entrance for example.

To ancient Mesoamericans and modern Natives of Mexico animals are really important in magick. In traditional Aztec thought everyone has a nahualli, animal that shares it's soul with you. However, a good sorcerer can obtain more nahualli. Though it will never share it's soul like the one you were born with. You can obtain other nahualli through ritual, by stealing someone else's nahualli, or as a gift from the gods. (This is very similar to the modern belief of personal totem animals, and it has a modern name; nagual or nagualism.) One sort of ritual to get another nahualli is to hunt, kill, and eat what animal you want. By eating the animal [or even a person] in magickal thought was to "take it's power" for yourself. [Think you are what you eat.] Life sustained on life, the cycle continues.

Animals are so important in magickal thought amongst the people of Mexico that where you're places on the social ladder would have to do with your nahualli. The frequently seen animals [Mice, skunks, pigs, cows, rabbits, etc] by humans represent commoners. Regular folk that make up the majority. The uncommonly seen animals represent the "middle class".[Coyotes, ocelotls etc].

The most powerful people on the social ladder [noble/ruling class] and the most powerful sorcerers are the infrequently, often times nocturnal, animals. [Jaguar, owl, bear etc] The most powerful and elusive of all these animals being the jaguar who is held at the highest level amongst most people in ancient and modern Mexico. Anybody with the born nahualli of a jaguar is thought to be endowed with being a powerful sorcerer and skilled at magick naturally.

In theory one can influence reality through the otherworld. Like a ripple effect when you through a stone into water. In the dream world you can turn into your nahualli, become in tune with it, and use its skills. This is especially useful if you have a flying type nahualli or totem, which can go into the heavens better and travel at a better speed.

The original article is here. Off of Tumblr, please share the link rather than the post. Thanks. ^_^

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Baba Yaga: Enigmatic And Powerful Mythological Figure In Slavic Folklore | MessageToEagle.com

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MessageToEagle.com May 16, 2016 Myths & Legends 0 Comments

MessageToEagle.com – Baba Yaga (Baba Jaga) is the archetypal witch from Slavic folklore and beliefs.

Baba Yaga lives somewhere inside or just outside a forest in a small cottage that stands on chicken legs or chicken feet (or sometimes a single chicken leg) and she flies by sitting in a mortar, which she controls ahead using the pestle.



In ancient times, superstitious people had avoided mentioning her name; instead, they assigned her various nicknames.

She is a witch often depicted as being bent over the magic cauldron surrounded by herbs and magical objects; she combines herbs preparing potions and cures.

She uses it to sweep away traces, so no one can catch her. Baba Yaga plays different roles in different kinds of folk tales. She may, for example, help someone in need, give good advice or revenge. Sometimes she is evil.

Baba Yaga's origin is not clear. In this enigmatic mythological figure, there are traces of shamanism, animism, totemism, so her status and abilities vary from one story to another.

According to many researchers, she symbolizes old and ugly women with certain supernatural powers.



Variations of the name Baba Yaga are found in the languages of the Eastern Slavic peoples.

Baba Yaga is famous figure in Slavic mythology and through the ages, many different and most unbelievable characteristics are attributed to her.

In ancient times, superstitious people had avoided mentioning her name; instead, they assigned her various nicknames. Personalized with different things, Baba Yaga has often been associated with evil things, such like abduction of souls and death. In certain myths, she is an evil female dragon, crow or fox; in others, she is 'almost' human-like, without any characteristics of an animal.

Baba Yaga keeps track of women's housework; she is also the guardian of life and death.

In Slavic folklore and beliefs, Baba Yaga is presented in three different ways.

First, she is *a woman-warrior* who handles Kladenets-sword (a fabulous magic sword in some Old Russian fairy tales) and fights together with the strongest of warriors.



babajaga4left

Second, she is *a kidnapper of children* by inviting them to her cottage. Later, the children must find a way to outsmart Baba-Yaga and escape.

Third, she is *a guide to all heroes* who visit her in her cottage. She treats them with food and drink, gives advice and guidance.

For many centuries, the character of Baba Yaga has been demonized by the church, in an attempt to destroy the complex character of this fairy tale figure.

The church has failed. Until today, Baba Yaga – even if she sometimes can be evil – is portrayed as a wise elder woman who provides guidance and advice to people who seek it.

Variations of the name Baba Yaga are found in the languages of the Eastern Slavic peoples. The first part of 'Baba Yaga's name – 'Baba' means 'woman', or, more exactly, 'old woman'. The same word is still used in Serbo-Croatian and Bulgarian cultures to describe both grandmother and old woman in general.

Modern Russian word for 'Baba' is '*babushka*' (meaning 'grandmother') and in Polish people say – '*babcia*' to describe an older woman, but 'Baba' means 'vicious or ugly woman'.



Mythical figure of Baba Yaga has numerous counterparts in the beliefs of the European people and their close neighbors. She resembles Frau Holle mentioned in ancient Germanic tales and a famous witch Bogorkań (Bogorkan) in Hungarian folklore. In the Czech ancient tales, Baba Yaga is called Baba Drasznica; she is an evil creature – Mother of Dragons – riding the dragon instead of a broom.

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The baby who was born twice

15:55 EST, 23 October 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

The baby who was born twice: Mom's joy after girl is taken OUT of womb for life-saving operation, then returned to her for birth

- **Margaret Boemer was told her baby had a tumour at 16-week ultrasound**
- **Doctors said 1lb and 3oz foetus's only hope was a life-saving operation**
- **Surgeons removed her from the womb for 20 minutes then put her back**
- **Lynlee Hope was born 12 weeks later after full term, weighing 5lb and 5oz**

By Dailymail.com Reporter



Lynlee Boemer with her mother Margaret after overcoming incredible odds to be born

When she grows up, Lynlee Boemer should demand to celebrate two birthdays a year.

For she is the baby who was born twice. Her proper entry into the world came 12 weeks after she was temporarily taken out of her mother's womb for a life-saving operation.

Doctors discovered a tumour in the tailbone of Margaret Boemer's unborn baby when the mother-to-be went for a routine ultrasound just 16 weeks into her pregnancy.

Her only hope was a medical procedure that required surgeons to open up the womb and take the 1 lb, 3 oz foetus out for 20 minutes for a do-or-die operation - and then put her back and sew up the uterus.

Mum Margaret was kept on bedrest and the replaced baby made it through another 12 weeks to nearly 36 weeks - full term - before the little girl, named Lynlee Hope, was born for the second time via C-section.

Lynlee weighed 5 lb and 5 oz and, after being whisked away for a check-up, she was moved into the nursery with the other babies.

Margaret, from Plano, Texas, had feared the worst after getting the shock ultrasound results.

'They saw something on the scan, and the doctor came in and told us that there was something seriously wrong with our baby and that she had a sacrococcygeal teratoma,' she told CNN. 'And it was very shocking and scary, because we didn't know what that long word meant or what diagnosis that would bring.'

Lynlee was actually born twice after doctors were forced to remove her from the whom when she was just 16 weeks old

Doctors discovered a tumour in the tailbone of Margaret Boemer's unborn baby when the mother-to-be went for a routine ultrasound just 16 weeks into her

During the surgery, Lynlee's heart slowed down to a standstill but she was kept alive by a specialist while the doctors removed the bulk of the growth

The teratoma is 'the most common tumour we see in a newborn,' said Dr. Darrell Cass, co-director of Texas Children's Fetal Centre and associate professor of surgery, pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology at Baylor College Medicine. 'Even though it's the most common we see, it's still pretty rare.'

The cause is unknown, although the tumour occurs in girls four times more often than in boys. The growth is seen in only one out of 30,000-70,000 live births.

Sometimes doctors can delay surgery until after the birth, but in LynLee's case the tumour was competing with the foetus for the body's blood flow 'so it becomes a competition,' said Dr. Cass.

'And in some instances, the tumour wins and the heart just can't keep up and the heart goes into failure and the baby dies,' he added.

Her only hope was a medical procedure that required surgeons to open up the womb and take the 1 lb, 3 oz foetus out for 20 minutes for a do-or-die operation

Margaret was kept on bedrest and the replaced baby made it through another 12 weeks to nearly 36 weeks - full term - before Lynlee Hope (pictured) was born via C-section

The Boemler family (pictured) with their newest addition, Lynlee Hope, after being born for the second time

As the tumour grew bigger, the baby's health deteriorated until doctors had no choice but to act.

One option was to terminate the pregnancy, a decision made all the more difficult by the fact that Margaret had originally been expecting twins but lost one of her babies before the second trimester.

Margaret said: 'LynLee didn't have much of a chance. At 23 weeks, the tumour was shutting her heart down and causing her to go into cardiac failure, so it was a choice of allowing the tumour to take over her body or giving her a chance at life.

'It was an easy decision for us: We wanted to give her life.'

One option give to Margaret was to terminate the pregnancy, a decision made all the more difficult by the fact she had originally been expecting twins but lost one of her babies

By the time surgeons were given the green light, Lynlee was nearly 24 weeks old and the tumour was almost the same size as the baby.

The operation took five hours, but Dr Cass said: 'The part on the foetus we do very, very quickly. It's only 20 minutes or so on the actual fetus.'

By the time surgeons were given the green light, Lynlee was nearly 24 weeks old and the tumour was almost the same size as the baby

Most of the time was taken up cutting into the uterus. Once the surgeons reached the baby she was lifted so she was ‘hanging out in the air.’

‘Essentially, the foetus is outside, like completely out, all the amniotic fluid falls out, it’s actually fairly dramatic,’ explained Dr. Cass.

During the surgery, Lynlee’s heart slowed down to a standstill but she was kept alive by a specialist while the doctors removed the bulk of the growth.

When they had done as much as they could, the surgeons placed LynLee back inside the womb and sewed her mother’s uterus ‘as sealed and as water tight as possible.’

‘It’s kind of a miracle you’re able to open the uterus like that and seal it all back and the whole thing works,’ said Dr. Cass.

At eight days old, little LynLee had one more ordeal on the operating table when the surgeons went back in to remove small bits of the tumour they hadn’t been able to reach the first time and where growing again.

Several weeks later, after making a full recovery, Margaret was allowed to take baby LynLee home. ‘It was her second birth, basically. I was willing to endure all those risks to give her a chance at life,’ she said.

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Baby born with water instead of blood miraculously survives

metro.co.uk

Simon Robb for Metro.co.ukSunday 16 Oct 2016 1:03 pm
Frankie Morrison was born with just 35ml of blood in her body (Picture: SWNS)

A baby has beat the odds after being born with just two tablespoons of blood in her entire body – and the rest made of water.

Just 35ml of blood was found inside Frankie Morrison when she was born – that's seven times less than the average newborn.

Her mother, Maria Sanders, 32, needed an emergency c-section after doctors discovered Frankie hadn't moved for two days due to the lack of blood.

Maria and her partner, Chris Morrison, 33, were told to expect the worst.

But little Frankie miraculously pulled through and is due to celebrate her first birthday on Thursday.



The mother needed an emergency c-section after medics found the baby not moving (Picture: SWNS)



The baby required two blood transfusions (Picture: SWNS)

Maria said: 'When I came around from the operation I could see people standing around me crying. I thought I had lost her.

'They said she had been having breathing difficulties and told us in a roundabout way that I had to go to see her because it's not looking good. They said they didn't hold out much hope for her.

'I went up to her and there was this chubby little eight pound baby who was so bloated because she had all this water instead of blood inside her.'

Doctors told them if Frankie survived she would be wheelchair bound or brain damaged.

But after two blood transfusions the little girl's health rapidly improved and she was given the OK to come home.

Now Frankie is a healthy baby (Picture: SWNS)



Frankie will be celebrating her first birthday on October 20 (Picture: SWNS)
Doctors said the baby just has a slightly low immune system, but everything else is OK (Picture: SWNS)

A year on and the only repercussions Frankie has experienced is a slightly weaker immune system then other children her age.

Maria said: ‘She went back at six months for a check up with her consultant and he was nearly in tears because he couldn’t believe how well she was doing.

‘It’s brilliant. We are just the luckiest people in the world.’

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Baby girl born at World Trade Center transportation hub

yahoo.com

NEW YORK (AP) — A baby has been born at the World Trade Center's transportation hub in Lower Manhattan.

Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman says the girl is the first baby born at the transportation center's new grand hall, called the Oculus (AH'-kyoo-luhs).

She was delivered late Wednesday by Port Authority Police Officer Brian McGraw, who's a trained emergency medical technician. Other officers provided assistance.

In August 2015, McGraw delivered another baby girl at the World Trade Center PATH station.

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Badass Cow Takes Down Helicopter And Walks Off Like A Boss huffingtonpost.com

09/20/2016 04:34 am ET
Ed MazzaOvernight Editor

The bovine revolution has begun.

A cow in Australia scuffled with a helicopter over the weekend, and the battle didn't end the way you might expect.

When an unidentified chopper pilot tried to round up cows at a cattle station in Coen, on the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland, on Sunday, things didn't go so well. Here's the aftermath, posted on social media by Australian student pilot and aviation enthusiast Brendan Grainger:

"It's believed the rails underneath the helicopter got tangled up in the cow's horns, causing the chopper to lose balance," the Queensland Police Service wrote on its website.

While the chopper was udderly destroyed, the 35-year-old pilot of the Robinson R22 Beta mustering helicopter was uninjured... except, perhaps for his pride.

And the cow? According to the Brisbane Times, the cow was just fine.

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The Brahan Seer - the Scottish Nostradamus

historic-uk.com

By Ben Johnson



The Brahan Seer, or Coinneach Odhar, was gifted with "the sight" - an ability to see visions that came unbidden day or night. His prophecies were so impressive that they are still quoted to this day.

The Second Sight, more correctly called the Two Sights, is the ability to see both this world and another world at the same time. The Second Sight has never been regarded as witchcraft in Scotland, it is seen more as a curse. *"Ah, take patience with the lad for he has the Sight and it is a terrible affliction."*

According to folklore, The Brahan Seer, Kenneth the Sallow (Coinneach Odhar) was born Kenneth Mackenzie, at Baile-na-Cille, in the Parish of Uig and Island of Lewis, about the beginning of the 17th century. He lived at Loch Ussie near to Dingwall in Ross-shire and worked as a labourer on the Brahan estate, seat of the Seaforth chieftains, from somewhere around 1675.

According to legend, it was through his mother that Kenneth the Sallow was given the sight. At a graveyard one night when ghosts were known to roam the earth, his mother encountered the ghost of a Danish princess on her way back to her grave. In order to allow her to pass back into the grave, Kenneth's mother demanded that the princess should pay a tribute, and asked that her son should be given the second sight. The legend goes that later that day, Kenneth found a small stone with a hole in the middle, through which he would look and see visions.

Some of his prophetic visions that came true in the years following his death include:

The Battle of Culloden (1745), which he uttered at the site, and his words were recorded. "Oh! Drumossie, thy bleak moor shall, ere many generations have passed away, be stained with the best blood of the Highlands. Glad am I that I will not see the day, for it will be a fearful period; heads will be lopped off by the score, and no mercy shall be shown or quarter given on either side."



Battle of Culloden by Mark Chums

The joining of the lochs in the Great Glen. This was accomplished by the construction of the Caledonian Canal in the 19th Century.

He talked of great black, bridleless horses, belching fire and steam, drawing lines of carriages through the glens. More than 200 years later, railways were built through the Highlands.

North Sea oil was foretold: *"A black rain will bring riches to Aberdeen."*

Coinneach Odhar spoke of the day when Scotland would once again have its own Parliament. This would only come, he said, when men could walk dry shod from England to France. The opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994 was followed a few years later by the opening of the first Scottish Parliament since 1707.

Streams of fire and water, he said, would run beneath the streets of Inverness and into every house. Gas and water pipes were laid down in the 19th century.

Pointing to a field far from seashore, loch or river, he said that a ship would anchor there one day. *"A village with four churches will get another spire,"* said Coinneach, *"and a ship will come from the sky and moor at it."* This happened in 1932 when an airship made an emergency landing and was tied up to the spire of the new church.

"The sheep shall eat the men" During the Highland Clearances, families were driven from the Highlands by the landowners and the land they farmed was given over to the grazing of sheep.

At the height of his fame and powers, Odhar made his most notorious prediction which would ultimately cost him his life. Isabella, wife of the Earl of Seaforth and said to be one of the ugliest women in Scotland, asked for his advice. She wanted news of her husband who was on a visit to Paris. Odhar reassured her that the Earl was in good health but refused to elaborate further.

This enraged Isabella, who demanded that he tell her everything or she would have him killed. Coinneach told her that her husband was with another woman, fairer than herself, and he foretold the end of the Seaforth line, with the last heir being deaf and dumb. (Francis Humberston Mackenzie, deaf and dumb from scarlet fever as a child, inherited the title in 1783. He had four children who died prematurely and the line came to an end.) Isabella was so incensed by this that she had Coinneach seized and thrown head-first into a barrel of boiling tar.

Whilst the legend of the Bahan Seer is well known in folklore, there is no documentation of a Coinneach Odhar ever having existed in the Highlands during the 17th century. But there is in the 16th century.

Parliamentary records from 1577 show that two writs were issued for the arrest of the “principal enchanter” Coinneach Odhar. This Coinneach was reputedly a gypsy who supplied poison to a Catherine Ross, who wished to remove the rivals to the inheritance of her sons. She had already recruited some 26 witches who had failed. The police were called and records show that while many of the witches were caught and burnt, what happened to Coinneach remains a mystery. If he was caught it is likely that he too would have been burnt, which reflects the legend that he was burnt in a spiked tar barrel. There is a stone slab by the light house at Chanonry Point, near Fortrose, that is said to mark the spot where he died. The inscription reads: *"This stone commemorates the legend of Coinneach Odhar better known as the BRAHAN SEER - Many of his prophesies were fulfilled and tradition holds that his untimely death by burning in tar followed his final prophecy of the doom of the House of Seaforth."*

Were these two different people or the same? Could the life of the gypsy and poisoner have been twisted into the story of the seer? Was the 16th century Coinneach the grandfather of the Brahan Seer?

Whatever the truth, the legend is well known and respected today. A Celtic stone, the Eagle Stone, stands in Strathpeffer, Ross-shire. The Seer said that if the stone fell down three times, then Loch Ussie would flood the valley below so that ships could sail to Strathpeffer. The stone has fallen down twice: it is now set in concrete.

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Bear encounter in Seward leads to school lockdowns, injured teen adn.com

Alaska Dispatch News

- Author: Annie Zak

An 18-year-old Seward high school student said Wednesday that a midday encounter with a black bear in the Kenai Peninsula town left him with a fractured and dislocated shoulder.

Kyle Hubbard said he was walking to his father's house sometime around 11:30 a.m. in the Forest Acres subdivision when a black bear "came out of the woods and basically ran me over and stepped all over me."

The Seward Police Department put Seward Middle School, Seward Elementary School and Seward High School on lockdown for less than an hour following what was initially reported as a bear mauling.

But Police Chief Tom Clemons said that, after investigating, police had heard a slightly different story of the encounter.

"Wasn't a bear attack, wasn't a mauling," Clemons said. "A run-in. The kid went backwards and screwed up his shoulder."

Clemons said that Hubbard told a police lieutenant that "he walked up, startled the bear — the bear, I think, stood up, and that startled this 18-year-old and he fell backwards."

Hubbard's sister, Wendy Brewi, offered one theory for the conflicting accounts.

"He got knocked out, and I'd be confused too," Brewi said. "Police told me that because he was disoriented and said two different things, they just said, 'OK, there was no attack.' … He said he was walking and saw a big black blob. He said it knocked him over and knocked him out."

Hubbard said he saw the bear clearly after he woke up, before it ran off.

Hubbard said he finished walking to his dad's house in pain before calling an ambulance. He was treated at Providence Seward Medical Center for shoulder injuries. He also said he was being examined for a possible concussion.

The bear also took his lunch, he said. A Hot Pocket.

Seward has had several high-profile run-ins with bears in recent weeks — last week, a 55-year-old man was injured in a mauling at the Seward airport. The week before, three bears were shot as they raided chicken coops outside the community.

32 Comments

Matthew Carberry 3821 day ago

There's a reason eyewitness testimony should be taken with a grain of salt. People aren't lying, it's just the brain doesn't process under stress particularly well when it comes to recall.

You'll note that police officers, trained observers, after providing immediate safety related information (the weapon is over there, here's the best description I have of an escaped suspect, etc) are not required to discuss their officer-related shootings in detail for a day or so after the event to ensure they don't give honest but wrong information that might impact the investigation.

Jeffrey1 day ago

There was an example of this on a tv show few years back where they put up a 6 foot fake monster in the dark on the side of the road and asked them what they saw. The descriptions varied from like 10-20 feet, teeth and movement exaggerations, even adding wings and glowing eyes.

It's due to the fight/flight mode, you really have to be trained or train yourself to concentrate on details in a sudden/frightening situation.

Will Griffin1 day ago

He bearly got injured.

Roof Tops1 day ago

Buwahahha! Thanks for that, it made my night!!

Oldzhimer1 day ago

Is it still bullying when you get knocked down and your lunch stolen, but it was a bear?

Bullying Alaska version maybe?

Can we get a Department of Education grant to raise awareness of this problem?

Dr. Nick Begich, are you already working on this? .....Good on ya.

sidd fynch22 hours ago

I'm guessing it was a chicken hot pocket. Time to put electric fences around the Seward convenience stores.

Comey1 day ago

He lost his hotpocket? Tragedy

Jeffrey1 day ago

Only if it was a good one...like meatball mozzarella or philly cheesesteak. Did his dad bring him a hot pocket to the hospital is my question.

Miles Jacobson1 day ago

No one should ever eat a hot pocket, There just gross !!

Giant8 hours ago

So the bear saved the kid!

Akrider1 day ago

Where's "Dave's not here Dave" to defend the bear's actions against a teenager? It's only a matter of time before a teen or young child is mauled or killed by a bear due to this idiotic "live with the bears" mentality that is being used with bears in and around towns and communities.

Cydney Terhune24 hours ago

I agree with that Akrider. Same with moose in the city. It's just a matter of time before one of these women pushing their baby in a stroller gets trampled.

Dave'sNotHereDave16 hours ago

In reply to:

Where's "Dave's not here Dave" to defend the bear's actions against a teenager? It's only a matter of time before a teen or young child is mauled or killed by a bear due to this idiotic "live with...

Akrider

YOU HAVEN'T MOVED TO THE LOWER 48 YET AKRIDER? "What" did the bear do wrong here? Just being alive? It is kind of important to note here that being 18, was probably walking along looking down, or looking at his phone and not paying attention much like everyone that age. Pretty normal and typical. Is it your advice to hunt down every living animal that possibly could harm a human and kill them all? You know the most dangerous animal in Yellowstone that has caused the most injuries in all the years it's been around? With millions of people visiting every year? The chipmunk. Bites more fingers and causes more injuries than any bear, moose, wolves, bison, elk, etc.. So whip out your 44 Akrider and head south and start killing them little dangerous animals. After you learn to take care of them, then maybe you can come back up and learn to live in the wild. 40+ years none of my relatives, family, children, or friends have ever been hurt by an animal. Choked on a chicken bone once!

Janette Banie15 hours ago

In reply to:

Where's "Dave's not here Dave" to defend the bear's actions against a teenager? It's only a matter of time before a teen or young child is mauled or killed by a bear due to this idiotic "live with...

—Akrider

There are plenty of non-bear places to live if that is what you are looking for.

Akrider10 hours ago

In reply to:

YOU HAVEN'T MOVED TO THE LOWER 48 YET AKRIDER? "What" did the bear do wrong here? Just being alive? It is kind of important to note here that being 18, was probably walking along looking down, or...

— Dave'sNotHereDave

Interesting how you #1, blame the victim and assume they were not paying attention and "looking down, or looking at his phone". #2 you then go one to compare this event to alleged happenings in a national park. Unbelievable!

Dave'sNotHereDave5 hours ago

Well we are supposed to be the superior beings and should be aware of our surroundings even though I wasn't blaming anyone. The "alleged" happenings are very much true. Feel free to contact the Rangers at Yellowstone. Keep trying to find something Akrider, however the bear still didn't do anything.

Frank Smith 2822 hours ago

We have black bears coming through the yard regularly. They're no problem. One cleaned out a huge, deep underground wasps' nest for us last month, taking about four days to finish it off. We sure were glad to see that gone.

nttf1 day ago

cue everyone saying he should have been carrying a high caliber handgun, or accusing him of being a tourist...

Chris Shier1 day ago

The Alaskan version of the old "dog ate my homework" scheme. Check why he left campus midday.

Chris Tadda1 day ago

Night of the Never-Ending Grizzly and Black Bears in Seward ~ !

Seahawks#1Fan9 hours ago

I didn't know bears eat hot pockets! LOL

Nicole Harper1 day ago

Sounds like Yogi and BooBoo are at it again- a Hot Pocket!! lol. Glad the kid wasn't more seriously hurt.

Evan S. Singh34 minutes ago

Here's the clue that some of the posters here missed:

"But Police Chief Tom Clemons said that, after investigating, police had heard a slightly different story of the encounter. "Wasn't a bear attack, wasn't a mauling," Clemons said.

There was no bear.

Hide replies

Sara Fredericks1 day ago

< user deleted >

Oldzhimer1 day ago

Apropos of absolutely nothing.....

James Mason 7711 day ago

In reply to:

< user deleted >

— Sara Fredericks

If that in fact happens it will be a big day for a lot of bitter, unfulfilled middle aged women.

Karan1 day ago

So u think there r A LOT of bitter unfulfilled middle aged women out there? How have u come to ur conclusions? It takes one to know one so i guess u r one also?

Alaskan Born1 day ago

In reply to:

< user deleted >

— Sara Fredericks

either way we are doomed

Miles Jacobson1 day ago

In reply to:

< user deleted >

— Sara Fredericks

no way she will be in jail

Mitch Buchannon1 day ago

well, that's embarrassing.

twinkle toes.

Wyatt Earth1 day ago

School lockdowns are so silly.

FreedomBen9 hours ago

Oh COME ON people. Wake up! It's time to ban Seward. It's simply too dangerous. To hell with your freedom. If it saves just one life, it's worth it! /sarc

If you see parallels to the arguments against firearm freedom and marijuana, you may be on to something there.

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Bell-ringing, Stone Heads and Ghosts - The Customs and Traditions of Halloween in Dorset

blogspot.co.uk

http://darkdorset.blogspot.co.uk/2015/10/bell-ringing-stone-heads-and-ghosts.html



Dark Dorset Online Scrapbook is an archive of current and past events relating to local history, folklore and mysteries that can be discovered in the English county of Dorset.

Saturday, 31 October 2015



Today is Hallowe'en, otherwise known as All Hallows Eve, a time for fun and games, dressing up and ghost stories. Traditionally it was believed that malevolent spirits, witches and fairies were abroad on this night. (see also Walpurgisnacht - The Springtime Halloween

)

Yet contrary to popular belief Hallowe'en does not have its origins in a celebration of evil but in an ancient celtic harvest festival of thanksgiving. The Celts split the year up into only two seasons: winter, which ran from November to the end of April, and summer, which ran from May to the end of October. They called the festival 'Samhain' (pronounced sow' an) meaning 'Summer End' and celebrated 'The Feast of the Dying Sun' by giving thanks for the year's harvest, a Celtic equivalent of New Year's Eve.



Traditional Bonfire

Samhain marked the third and final harvest and the storage of provisions for the winter. It was a solar festival consisting of fire rituals and large bonfires that would be lit in honour of the sun, a tradition that still survives today as 'Bonfire Night' or 'Bone Fire Night' as it was originally called. The Celts believed that on the eve of Samhain the dead rose out of their graves to wander freely about the earth and make trouble by harming crops and causing domestic disturbances. The veil between the worlds of the living and the dead was believed to be at its thinnest point in the year at Samhain, making communication between the living and the dead much

easier.

At the same time of year that the Celts were celebrating Samhain, the Romans celebrated the festival of Pomona, the goddess of orchards and the harvest. Apples and nuts were among the special foods used and these retained a place in surviving Halloween festivities.

When the Christian Church set out to convert followers of pagan religions, church leaders astutely saw that they would have an easier time if they incorporated existing holy days and rites into their own. Worship of pagan deities was translated into veneration of the Christian saints. In the 7th century Pope Boniface IV introduced All Saints' Day to replace the pagan festival of the dead on May 13, 610, when he dedicated the Pantheon in Rome to St. Mary and other martyred Christians. Later, Gregory III reestablished the festival to honor the saints of St. Peter's Church and changed the date from May 13 to November 1 to coincide with pagan festivals. (Presently the Greek Orthodox Church still observes it on the first Sunday after Pentecost.) Later in 834AD, the Christian church adopted Samhain and renamed it ‘Hallow Tide’, ‘Hallow’ meaning ‘Holy’, Pope Gregory IV made the festival official, to be observed by all churches. So 31st October was named as ‘All Hallows’ Eve’, which later became known as ‘Hallowe’en’. Church bells would always be rung on Hallowe’en night in order to guide lost Christian souls back to the sanctuary of the church and at the same time, drive evil spirits away. The annual ringing still takes place at Milton Abbey, Milton Abbas.

Dorset Folklorist, John Symonds Udal mentioned about the traditions of Hallowe'en Bell -ringing in his book 'Dorsetshire Folklore' published in 1922:

> *Hone is responsible for the statement that "At Blandford Forum, in Dorsetshire, 'there was a custom, in the papal times, to ring bells at Allhallow-tide for all Christian souls.'""*
>
> *This assumes that this custom exited practically alon at Blandford. Hutchins does not notice it; and I have very grave doubts myself whether this statement of Hone can be accepted as justifying this assumption. Brand states (i,310) that"it is stated in Kethe's sermon preached at Blandford Forum in Dorsetshire, January 17th, 1570, p.19, that 'there was a custom, in the papal times, to ring bells at Allhallow-tide for all Christian souls'." He thus shows the authority for Hon'es statement, which is contained in a sermon preached at Blandford in which this allusion to a very general custom appears to have been made.*

Instead of sacrifices, the Church promoted honoring the dead with prayers. Food and wine offerings were replaced with soul cakes, little square buns decorated with currants. The cakes were given away to the village poor, who in turn would pray for the dead. "Soulers" would walk about begging for cakes.

The Christian Church also allowed masquerading but emphasized that it was to honor dead

saints and not to frighten off spirits.

The Headle

ss Martyr of Halstock

One Dorset Ghost is said to return to haunt the village of Halstock this night, at one hour after midnight. The headless ghost of Saint Juthware is said to be seen carrying her head in the lane leading to Abbots Hill now know as Judith

Hill. (see The Quiet Woman Legend)

The Silent Guardians - From Skulls to Stone Heads to Jack O' Lanterns.



Shipton Gorge Stone Head

In ancient times the importance of the skull as a sacred symbol originated in archaic beliefs identifying the cranium as the seat of the soul and the link with the world of spirits, hence their use as a protection against evil. In folklore we still see the relevance today as with the Skull of Bettiscombe Manor (see Bettiscombe Skull legend). Carved stone heads were made according to the same tradition of offering protection in hope of dispelling evil spirits from the threshold of buildings and sacred sites, as long as they were treated with respect.

The sacred heads were feared so much that many would not even speak of where the heads lay for fear of bad luck. Stone heads were also used for guardian and luck purposes and can still be seen to this day around Britain, two of which were discovered by Jim Chaplin in 1969 when land was being cleared for the construction of Rockway, Shipton Gorge and are now displayed in the Dorset County Museum.

This tradition of a symbolic guardian to the house is carried on today in the form of the surviving Hallowe'en custom of carving images on Jack o' Lanterns. This dates back to when the display of ancestral skulls were replaced by the old custom of using hollowed out turnips, beets or manglewurzels. Candles were used to create grotesque lanterns as a protection from evil. The Irish who immigrated to America found pumpkins a suitable substitute for turnips and beets and these have been an essential part of Halloween celebrations since Victorian days.

x

Below, extract taken from the Chambers Book of Days October 31st 1864, details the traditions of Halloween.

Halloween

There is perhaps no night in the year which the popular imagination has stamped with a more peculiar character than the evening of the 31st of October, known as All Hallow's Eve, or Halloween. It is clearly a relic of pagan times, for there is nothing in the church observance of the ensuing day of All Saints to have originated such extra ordinary notions as are connected with this celebrated festival, or such remarkable practices as those by which it is distinguished.

The leading idea respecting Halloween is that it is the time, of all others, when supernatural influences prevail. It is the night set apart for a universal walking abroad of spirits, both of the visible and invisible world; for, as will be afterwards seen, one of the special characteristics attributed to this mystic evening, is the faculty conferred on the immaterial principle in humanity to detach itself from its corporeal tenement anal wander abroad through the realms of space. Divination is then believed to attain its highest power, and the gift asserted by Glendower of calling spirits 'from the vasty deep,' becomes available to all who choose to avail themselves of the privileges of the occasion.

There is a remarkable uniformity in the fireside customs of this night all over the United Kingdom. Nuts and apples are everywhere in requisition, and consumed in immense numbers. Indeed the name of Nutcrack Night, by which Halloween is known in the north of England, indicates the predominance of the former of these articles

in making up the entertainments of the evening. They are not only cracked and eaten, but made the means of vaticination in love affairs. And here we quote from Burns's poem of Halloween:

> *The auld guidwife's well hoordit nits*
> *Are round and round divided,*
> *And mony lads' and lasses' fates*
> *Are there that night decided:*
> *Some kindle, couthie, side by side,*
> *And burn thegither trimly;*
> *Some start awa wi' saucy pride,*
> *And jump out owre the chimly*
> *Fu' high that night.*
> *Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;*
> *Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;*
> *But this is Jock, and this is me,*
> *She says in to hersel':*
> *He bleezed owre her, and she owre him,*
> *As they wad never mair part;*
> *Till, fuff! he started up the lum,*
> *And Jean had e'en a sair heart*
> *To see 't that night.'*

Brand, in his Popular Antiquities, is more explicit:

> *'It is a custom in Ireland, when the young women would. know if their lovers are faithful, to put three nuts upon the bars of the grate, naming the nuts after the lovers. If a nut cracks or jumps, the lover will prove unfaithful; if it begins to blaze or burn, he has a regard for the person making the trial. If the nuts named after the girl and her lover burn together, they will be married.'*

As to apples, there is an old custom, perhaps still observed in some localities on this merry night, of hanging up a stick horizontally by a string from the ceiling, and putting a candle on the one end, and an apple on the other. The stick being made to twirl rapidly, the merry makers in succession leap up and snatch at the apple with their teeth (no use of the hands being allowed), but it very frequently happens that the candle comes round before they are aware, and scorches them in the face, or anoints them with grease. The disappointments and misadventures occasion, of course, abundance of laughter. But the grand sport with apples on Halloween, is to set them afloat in a tub of water, into which the juveniles, by turns, duck their heads with the view of catching an apple. Great fun goes on in watching the attempts of the youngster in the pursuit of the swimming fruit, which wriggles from side to side of the tub, and evades all attempts to capture it; whilst the disappointed aspirant is obliged to abandon the chase in favour of another whose turn has now arrived.

The apples provided with stalks are generally caught first, and then comes the tug of war to win those which possess no such append-ages. Some competitors will deftly suck up the apple, if a small one, into their mouths. Others plunge manfully overhead in pursuit of a particular apple, and having forced it to the bottom of the tub, seize it firmly with their teeth, and emerge, dripping and triumphant, with their prize. This venturous procedure is generally rewarded with a hurrah! by the lookers on, and is recommended, by those versed in Halloween aquatics, as the only sure method of attaining success. In recent years, a practice has been introduced, probably by some tender mammas, timorous on the subject of their offspring catching cold, of dropping a fork from a height into the tub among the apples, and thus turning the sport into a display of marksmanship. It forms, however, but a very indifferent substitute for the joyous merriment of ducking and diving.

It is somewhat remarkable, that the sport of ducking for apples is not mentioned by Burns, whose celebrated poem of Halloween presents so graphic a picture of the ceremonies practised on that evening in the west of Scotland, in the poet's day. Many of the rites there described are now obsolete or nearly so, but two or three still retain place in various parts of the country. Among these is the custom still prevalent in Scotland, as the initiatory Halloween ceremony, of pulling kailstocks or stalks of colewort. The young people go out hand in hand, blindfolded, into the kailyard or garden, and each pulls the first stalk which he meets with. They then return to

the fireside to inspect their prizes. According as the stalk is big or little, straight or crooked, so shall the future wife or husband be of the party by whom it is pulled. The quantity of earth sticking to the root denotes the amount of fortune or dowry; and the taste of the pith or custoc indicates the temper. Finally, the stalks are placed, one after another, over the door, and the Christian names of the persons who chance thereafter to enter the house are held in the same succession to indicate those of the individuals whom the parties are to marry.

Another ceremony much practised on Halloween, is that of the Three Dishes or Luggies. Two of these are respectively filled with clean and foul water, and one is empty. They are ranged on the hearth, when the parties, blindfolded, advance in succession, and dip their fingers into one. If they dip into the clean water, they are to marry a maiden; if into the foul water, a widow; if into the empty dish, the party so dipping is destined to be either a bachelor or an old maid. As each person takes his turn, the position of the dishes is changed. Burns thus describes the custom:

In order, on the clean hearth stane,
The luggies three are ranged,
And every time great care is ta'en
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's year did desire,
Because he gat the toom dish thrice,
He heaved them on the fire
In wrath that night.

The ceremonies above described are all of a light sportive description, but there are others of a more weird like and fearful character, which in this enlightened incredulous age have fallen very much into desuetude. One of these is the celebrated spell of eating an apple before a looking glass, with the view of discovering the inquirer's future husband, who it is believed will be seen peeping over her shoulder. A curious, and withal, cautious, little maiden, who desires to try this spell, is thus represented by Burns:

'Wee Jenny to her granny says:
"Will ye go wi' me, granny?
I'll eat the apple at the glass,
I gat frae uncle Johnny.'"

A request which rouses the indignation of the old lady:

'She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron

Out through that night.

"Ye little skelpie limmer's face!
I daur you try sic sportin',
As seek the foul thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
And lived and died deleeret,
On sic a night."

Granny's warning was by no means a needless one, as several well authenticated instances are related of persons who, either from the effects of their own imagination, or some thoughtless practical joke, sustained

such severe nervous shocks, while essaying these Halloween spells, as seriously to imperil their health.

Another of these, what may perhaps be termed unhallowed, rites of All Hallows' Eve, is to wet a shirt sleeve, hang it up to the fire to dry, and lie in bed watching it till midnight, when the apparition of the individual's future partner for life will come in and turn the sleeve. Bums thus alludes to the practice in one of his songs:

'The last Halloween I was waukin',
My droukit sark sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness cam' up the house staukin',
And the very gray breeks o' Tam Glen!'

Other rites for the invocation of spirits might be referred to, such as the sowing of hemp seed, and the winnowing of three wechts of nothing, i. e., repeating three times the action of exposing corn to the wind. In all of these the effect sought to be produced is the same the appearance of the future husband or wife of the experimenter. A full description of them will be found in the poem of Burns, from which we have already so largely quoted. It may here be remarked, that popular belief ascribes to children born on Halloween, the possession of certain mysterious faculties, such as that of perceiving and holding converse with supernatural beings. Sir Walter Scott, it will be recollected, makes use of this circumstance in his romance of The Monastery.

In conclusion, we shall introduce an interesting story, with which we have been favoured by a lady. The leading incidents of the narrative may be relied on as correct, and the whole affair forms matter of curious thought on the subject of Halloween divination:
Mr. and Mrs. M were a happy young couple, who, in the middle of the last century, resided on their own estate in a pleasant part of the province of Leinster, in Ireland. Enjoying a handsome competence, they spent their time in various rural occupations; and the birth of a little girl promised to crown their felicity, and provide them with an object of perpetual interest. On the Halloween following this last event, the parents retired to rest at their usual hour, Mrs. M having her infant on her arm, so that she might be roused by the slightest uneasiness it might exhibit. From teething or some other ailment, the child, about midnight, became very restless, and not receiving the accustomed attention from its mother, cried so violently as to waken Mr. M. He at once called his wife, and told her the baby was uneasy, but received no answer.

He called again more loudly, but still to no purpose; she seemed to be in a heavy uneasy slumber, and when all her husband's attempts to rouse her by calling and shaking proved ineffectual, he was obliged to take the child himself, and try to appease its wailings. After many vain attempts of this sort on his part, the little creature at last sobbed itself to rest, and the mother slept on till a much later hour than her usual time of rising in the morning. When Mr. M saw that she was awake, he told her of the restlessness of the baby during the night, and how, after having tried in vain every means to rouse her, he had at last been obliged to make an awkward attempt to take her place, and lost thereby some hours of his night's rest.

'I, too,' she replied, 'have passed the most miserable night that I ever experienced; I now see that sleep and rest are two different things, for I never felt so unrefreshed in my life. How I wish you had been able to awake me it would have spared me some of my fatigue and anxiety! I thought I was dragged against my will into a strange part of the country, where I had never been before, and, after what appeared to me a long and weary journey on foot, I arrived at a comfortable looking house.

I went in longing to rest, but had no power to sit down, although there was a nice supper laid out before a good fire, and every appearance of preparations for an expected visitor. Exhausted as I felt, I was only allowed to stand for a minute or two, and then hurried away by the same road back again; but now it is over, and after all it was only a dream.'
Her husband listened with interest to her story, and then sighing deeply, said: 'My dear Sarah, you will not long have me beside you; whoever is to be your second husband played last night some evil trick of which you have been the victim.'

Shocked as she felt at this announcement, she endeavoured to suppress her own feelings and rally her husband's spirits, hoping that it would pass from his mind as soon as he had become engrossed by the active business of the day.

Some months passed tranquilly away after this occurrence, and the dream on Halloween night had well nigh been forgotten by both husband and wife, when Mr. M's health began to fail. He had never been a robust man, and he now declined so rapidly, that in a short time, notwithstanding all the remedies and attentions that skill could suggest, or affection bestow, his wife was left a mourning widow. Her energetic mind and active habits, however, prevented her from abandoning herself to the desolation of grief. She continued, as her husband had done during his life, to farm the estate, and in this employment, and the education of her little girl, she found ample and salutary occupation. Alike admired and beloved for the judicious management of her worldly affairs, and her true Christian benevolence and kindliness of heart, she might easily, had she been so inclined, have established herself respectably for a second time in life, but such a thought seemed never to cross her mind.

She had an uncle, a wise, kind old man, who, living at a distance, often paid a visit to the widow, looked over her farm, and gave her useful advice and assistance. This old gentleman had a neighbour named C, a prudent young man, who stood very high in his favour. Whenever they met, Mrs. M's uncle was in the habit of rallying him on the subject of matrimony. On one occasion of this kind, C excused himself by saying that it really was not his fault that he was still a bachelor, as he was anxious to settle in life, but had never met with any woman whom he should like to call his wife. 'Well, C,' replied his old friend, 'you are, I am afraid, a saucy fellow, but if you put yourself into my hands, I do not despair of suiting you.'

Some bantering then ensued, and the colloquy terminated by Mrs. M's uncle inviting the young man to ride over with him next day and visit his niece, whom C had never yet seen. The proffer was readily accepted; the two friends started early on the following morning, and after a pleasant ride, were approaching their destination. Here they descried, at a little distance, Mrs. M retreating towards her house, after making her usual matutinal inspection of her farm. The first glance which Mr. C obtained of her made him start violently, and the more he looked his agitation increased. Then laying his hand on the arm of his friend, and pointing his finger in the direction of Mrs. M, he said: 'Mr., we need not go any further, for if ever I am to be married, there is my wife!'

Well, C, was the reply, that is my niece, to whom I am about to introduce you; but tell me, he added, is this what you call love at first sight, or what do you mean by your sudden decision in favour of a person with whom you have never exchanged a word? Why, sir, replied the young man, I find I have betrayed myself, and must now make my confession. A year or two ago, I tried a Halloween spell, and sat up all night to watch the result. I declare to you most solemnly, that the figure of that lady, as I now see her, entered my room and looked at me. She stood a minute or two by the fire and then disappeared as suddenly as she came. I was wide awake, and felt considerable remorse at having thus ventured to tamper with the powers of the unseen world; but I assure you, that every particular of her features, dress, and figure, have been so present to my mind ever since, that I could not possibly make a mistake, and the moment I saw your niece, I was convinced that she was indeed the woman whose image I beheld on that never to be forgotten Halloween.

The old gentleman, as may be anticipated, was not a little astonished at his friend's statement, but all comments on it were for the time put a stop to by their arrival at Mrs. M's house. She was glad to see her uncle, and made his friend welcome, performing the duties of hospitality with a simplicity and heartiness that were very attractive to her stranger guest. After her visitors had refreshed themselves, her uncle walked out with her to look over the farm, and took opportunity, in the absence of Mr. C, to recommend him to the favourable consideration of his niece. To make a long story short, the impression was mutually agreeable. Mr. C, before leaving the house, obtained permission from Mrs. M to visit her, and after a brief courtship, they were married. They lived long and happily together, and it was from their daughter that our informant derived that remarkable episode in the history of her parents which we have above narrated.

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Big cat filmed by dad prowling field yards from his home and kid's playground

11:33, 10 Nov 2016 Updated 11:33, 10 Nov 2016 By Ian Murphy , Liz Sharpe

mirror.co.uk



A big cat has been filmed prowling around a field just yards from a children's playground and family homes in a sleepy village.

Crystal-clear video footage shows the large beast slowly turning around before making its way into a patch of bushes.

The adult cat, which is around 4ft in length, has a black tail and appears to have patterned markings similar to a lynx.

Philip White, 39, was looking out of his patio window when he spotted the giant animal in a field behind his home in the picturesque village of Great Alne, Warks.



Phillip White 39, at his home where he filmed a big cat
The large cat moving in the fields behind Phillip White's house

Philip, who works for a waste storage firm, managed to film the animal which walked past his home just 70m (230ft) away from him on October 29.

The dad-of-one said: "I've seen it before but never had my camera so when it appeared again I just started filming.

SWNS.com



"I saw it on the left and at first I thought it might be a deer.

A children's playground in the next field over to where Phillip White filmed the big cat
The field behind Phillip White's house where he saw the big cat moving

"Then it was on the right and it moved quickly across the field," he continued.

"It was skulking around and that's when I took the video.

SWNS.com



SWNS.com



SWNS.com



SWNS.com

"It's a big cat in my mind, there's no doubt about it. It looks like a wild cat you normally see in the zoo or a safari park.

"Either it's escaped from a private collection or just living in the wild but it was pretty scary to see.

"It looked fully grown and was walking around with confidence so its obviously used to its surroundings.

Phillip says the animal was walking around with confidence

Phillip says he is concerned for the safety of children in the area

"We keep our windows and doors closed at all times now and are always careful when we take our one-year-old daugther out in the garden."

Phillip, who filmed the dramatic footage at around 10am, said he was concerned for the safety of people in the village.

He added: "I am worried for the children because they are more vulnerable.

"There are lots of families. There is actually a children's playground nearby so the thought of that is quite concerning."

The sighting comes animal, described as a large feline creature with leopard makings, was also spotted in the same area just weeks earlier at 8.20am on October 8.

The creature, which is thought to be larger than a fox, was reported by a resident to Alcester Police South Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Another resident, Colin Wilks, 60, from nearby Alcester, Warks., also said he heard a creature growl while he was walking his dogs on October 10.

DailyMirror

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SWNS.com

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Conspiracy theorists claim HUGE dragon has been filmed flying over China

00:30, 20 Oct 2016 Updated 00:30, 20 Oct 2016 By Rachel Bishop

mirror.co.uk



Is this flying creature a real dragon caught on camera?

Bizarre footage of a 'dragon' flying over mountain ranges in China has got conspiracy theorists in a spin.

Over-excited YouTubers compared the mythical beasts to tsunamis and black holes as they set out to prove the clip showed a real-life fire breathing creature.

The majestic animal is apparently flying above China - which is considered the ancient kingdom of the mythical dragon - near the border with Laos.

The theories behind what the footage shows ranges from it being a "real dragon" - or maybe a flying dinosaur .



A dragon allegedly seen flying over mountains in China

The bizarre creature was caught on camera flying over mountains in China

Despite people pointing out the footage had been created using computer graphics, others remained adamant it wasn't fake.

The footage has been viewed more than 100,000 times since it was uploaded to YouTube account ApexTV.

Writing across the video asks viewers: "Dragon or Pterodactyl?"

The pterodactyl, known as a pterosaurs, are flying reptiles which have been extinct for 66 million years.

Conspiracy theorists have gone wild for the footage

Chao’s Gotsokillz commented underneathwrote: “Dragon is real. Nothing is impossible on earth. ? Tsunamis, black holes, etc.

"Science can explain, but sometimes there are things that science cant explain. It's up to us if we believe it or not.”

Another named Chibi Selena wrote: “That’s crazy, I think it’s a dragon. Love the vid!”



A dragon allegedly seen flying over mountains in China



A dragon allegedly seen flying over mountains in China

Others believe it is simply computer-generated fakery

While Arcabuz wrote: "It's an extraterrestrial named draconian, superior race creators of life."

But others were not convinced as one users wrote: "C'mon guys. The frames to the background don't even match up. People believe this? The uploader knows this is fake but it makes good views so f*** it."

And Dank Dud3 wrote: “It looks pretty fake as the background is blurry and the dragon is pretty clear.”

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Couples Face Heavy Competition In The Bizarre Sport Of Wife Carrying

huffingtonpost.com

Winning couples receive the woman's weight in beer.

10/10/2016 02:03 pm ET

Married couples face a lot of hurdles, but not like the contestants in the North American Wife Carrying Championship.



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- This year's competition took place Saturday at a ski resort in Newry, Maine. Forty-four competing couples put their relationship — and their muscles — to the test by running through an obstacle course that included log hurdles, sand traps and mud. Lots and lots of mud.
- As the event title implies, the man has to carry his beloved through the whole 278-yard course, according to The Associated Press. The couples don't have to be married, but each team must have a male and female member over the age of 21.
- The couple with the fastest time wins fame, glory, the woman's weight in beer and an amount of cash equal to five times her weight.
- Elliot and Giana Storey of Westbrook, Maine, had the top time of 59.18 seconds and ran away with 11 cases of Goose Island Oktoberfest beer and $665. The Storeys will also have a new story to tell: Saturday's win qualified them for the world championship wife-carrying competition in Sonkajarvi, Finland, next summer, according to the Bethel Sun Journal.
- Competing men can carry their partner any way they choose, but the preferred method is the "Estonian" carry, where the woman holds the man's waist with her hands while squeezing his neck with her legs. The "chicken carry," where she sits on his shoulders, also has its proponents.
- Wife carrying as a sport is based on a legendary Finnish robber named Ronkainen, who supposedly wouldn't let anyone join his gang unless they could complete a difficult course with a heavy sack on their back. Ronkainen's initiation challenge may or may not have also involved stealing women from neighboring villages. The first modern-day wife-carrying event took place in 1991, with other competitions following thereafter, according to The Ski Channel.



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- Alex Gauvin and Casey Maynard didn't win this year's competition, but he won her heart when he proposed to her after finishing their run.

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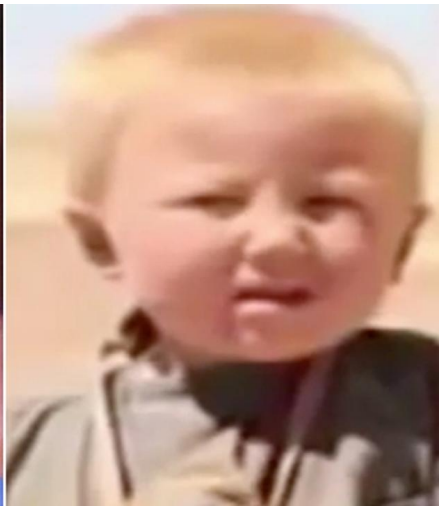
Bizarre theory claims Donald Trump was born in Pakistan and raised as a Muslim

By Rachel Bishop 23:27, 15 NOV 2016 Updated 23:38, 15 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

Thousands of social media users claim the US president-elect was born in lawless North Waziristan in 1946 and named Dawood Ibrahim Kham





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Donald Trump was born in Pakistan and raised as a Muslim, according to a bizarre theory spreading across the internet.

Thousands of social media users claim the US president-elect was born in lawless North Waziristan in 1946 and named Dawood Ibrahim Kham.

People have even said a photo of a little blonde boy pictured in the country in the early 1950s proves the weird ideology.

Trump - 'aka Kham' - was apparently educated in Madrassa until a car accident killed his parents in 1954.

He was then fostered by a retiring British Indian Army captain, who took him to London, where he was adopted by the Trump family in 1955.



Broadcaster Neo News shared the story alongside several posts on social media, as the host announced: “Believe it or not, presidential candidate Donald Trump was born in Pakistan and not in America.”

If the statement is true it would render Trump, 70, ineligible to be president of the United States as the US Constitution says the nation’s leader has to be a “natural born citizen.”

Trump came under fire during his election campaign after repeatedly saying that President Barack Obama, 55, was not a US citizen even though he was born in Hawaii to a Kenyan dad.

After he continued to call on Obama to show his birth certificate it seems the tables have turned, as thousands of people are saying Trump must do the same. People also want him to take a DNA test.

North Waziristan is a notorious hotbed of Islamist militancy and a haven for groups such as al-Qaida and the Taliban.



The odd theory has spread after Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin vowed to tackle terror group ISIS this week.



Russian President Vladimir Putin

Less than a week after the billionaire's election, the Kremlin said Putin called Trump yesterday to begin negotiations over how best to tackle to terrorism.

The Russian is reported to have said he is ready for dialogue with the US "on the basis of mutual respect, non-intervention into each other's internal affairs".

According to the news agency Kremlin, Putin and Trump have agreed to "work to channel bilateral relationships into constructive cooperation, to combine efforts to tackle international terrorism and extremism, and to continue contact by telephone and to work towards meeting in person".

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The Black Masses of La Voisin: How a Fortune Teller Became a Murderess in the French Royal Court

ancient-origins.net

Ancient Origins



The Black Masses of La Voisin: How a Fortune Teller Became a Murderess in the French Royal Court

Catherine Monvoisin was a woman with a dark story. Her life influenced the world of the occult and the court of Louis XIV, a famous king whose golden palace brought him immortal fame and countless lovers. Her spiritual gifts made her a wealthy and powerful woman, but when the life of the lady known as *La Voisin* became combined with intrigue and scandal in the French Royal Court, there was no way it could have had a happy ending.

A Woman Like No Other?

Catherine Deshayes was born around 1640. When she was a young woman she married Antoine Monvoisin. Monvoisin had a jewelry shop in Paris, but life didn't bring him good luck in business. He went bankrupt and his wife decided to handle the family budget on her own. She must have been a well-educated woman as she had some medical knowledge. Catherine was a midwife and also provided women with abortions.

Apart from this, Catherine became well-known in the city as a talented clairvoyant and fortune teller. Eventually these gifts led her to become one of the most mystical and fascinating people in the second half of 17th century Paris.



17th-century print of Catherine Deshayes' portrait held by a winged devil. (Public Domain)

Catherine's spiritual abilities became more and more admired, especially as she claimed her powers were a gift from God. She told people that she acquired her gift when she was nine years old. Catherine also studied many other disciplines and gained some knowledge about physiology. However, she based her medical work on what information she attained from reading faces and hands and forecasting the future.

- Mademoiselle Maupin: A Damsel Who Was Never in Distress
- Questioning the Dramatic Story of the Empress Messalina, Was She a Cruel Doxy or the Victim of a Smear Campaign?

17th-century print of Catherine Deshayes' portrait held by a winged devil.

- Mithridates VI of Pontus: The Poison King of Pontus and Aggravation to Rome

When Catherine had achieved enough monetary success she created a special mystical atmosphere in her workplace. It is known that she spent 1,500 livres to buy a crimson red velvet robe embroidered with images of eagles in golden thread. She spent quite a lot of money on her image - but the investment worked by increasing her number of clients as well.

In 1665, a priest of Saint Vincent de Paul's order and the Congregation of the Mission questioned her abilities. However, Catherine (now known as "La Voisin") was intelligent, and she stood in front of the professors at Sorbonne University and explained how her gifts worked. She was set free for her skills in rhetoric and her impressive performance in front of her critics. With time, she improved her rituals and added a "black mass" to her skillset - in which she was used as a living altar for the spirits that were being worshiped.



Catherine Monvoisin and the priest Étienne Guibourg performing a "Black Mass" for the mistress of King Louis XIV of France, Madame de Montespan (lying on the altar). (1895) By Henry de Malvost.

Catherine Monvoisin and the priest Étienne Guibourg performing a "Black Mass" for the mistress of King Louis XIV of France, Madame de Montespan (lying on the altar). (1895) By Henry de Malvost. (Public Domain)

The Witch's Power

La Voisin soon became a very popular figure in the king's court. Many important people asked her for help, advice, and secret medical procedures. Some of her clients were: François Henri de Montmorency-Bouteville, (the Duc de Luxembourg), Françoise-Athénaď's de Rochechouart Montespan, (the Marquise de Montespan and king's mistress), Olympe Mancini (the Comtesse de Soissons), her sister Marie Anne Mancini (the Duchesse de Bouillon), and the Comtesse de Gramont (known as "La Belle Hamilton").

Catherine Monvoisin was smart enough to survive most oppressions and criticisms. But when she became a part of an affair which was one of the greatest scandals in the life of Louis XIV her life was also put in danger.

Portrait of Madame de Montespan. (1640-1707) (Public Domain)

It began when La Voisin was hired by Madame de Montespan to perform black masses. In 1667 the ceremonies took place in a house on Rue de la Tanniere. It is unknown if the king attended these rituals, although rumors suggested that his power came from the devil. A witness of the black masses suggested that Montespan was trying to find a way to secure Louis XIV's love. During one of the meetings Montespan received a special potion and aphrodisiac - which she subsequently used to drug the king.



Portrait of Madame de Montespan. (1640-1707)

A close relationship with Montespan caused more problems for La Voisin. The king's frustrated lover became so obsessed with him that she would have preferred to see him dead than with another woman. When the king became infatuated with Angelique de Fontanges in 1679, Montespan asked La Voisin to kill the lovers. Catherine disagreed at first, but it seems that with time she accepted the angry Montespan's proposal. La Voisin created a poison and plan. However, things didn't go as she expected.





Portraits of Louis XIV from 1701 by Hyacinthe Rigaud and Marie Angélique de Scorailles, duchess of Fontanges (date unknown).

Portraits of Louis XIV from 1701 by Hyacinthe Rigaud (Public Domain) and Marie Angélique de Scorailles, duchess of Fontanges (date unknown). (Public Domain)

Unfortunately for her, Louis' sister-in-law (the duchess d'Orleans) was poisoned instead. Moreover, many other enemies and rivals of Catherine's clients were also killed with the poison. La Voisin was accused of the crimes, but during the hours of torture she never admitted her clients' names nor told her persecutors who the people were that attended her black masses. It is believed that she was involved in the death of between 1000 – 2500 people.

At the same time, Montespan was still one of the most trusted people in the king's court. He didn't connect her with the deaths at all. There is even evidence that she was one of the king's advisers during the trial. Montespan was almost freed from her involvement in the crime, but in July 1680 Catherine's daughter, Marguerite, proved that Montespan was one of her mother's clients. The king didn't immediately believe Marguerite's story. As Louis wrote in his letter to La Reynie in Lille, August 2, 1680:

> *"'Having seen the declarations of Marguerite Monvoisin, prisoner in my Chateau of Vincennes, made on the 12th of last month, and the examination to which you subjected her on the 26th of the same month, I write you this letter to inform you that my intention is that you should devote all possible care to elucidate the facts contained in the said declarations and examinations; that you should remember to have written down in separate memorials the answers, confrontations, and everything concerning the report that may hereafter be made on the said declarations and examinations (to the judges), and that meanwhile you defer reporting to my royal Chamber, sitting at the Arsenal, the depositions of Romani and Bertrand until you receive orders from me. Louis."*

Château de Vincennes keep, from the south-east corner of the moat.(Pierre Camateros/CC BY SA 2.5)



Château de Vincennes keep, from the south-east corner of the moat.

The Death of a Murderess

Catherine was burned at the stake in the Place de Greve in the heart of Paris on February 22, 1680. It is uncertain what happened to her daughter Marguerite. Did the king or one of his favorites save her? Or was she sentenced to death by murder in the dark streets of Paris?

The answer to this question is unknown. However, legends about her infamous mother continued long after La Voisin's death. As for Montespan - she died in May 1707 as a 65-year-old woman and was never charged for the crime she committed with La Voisin.



'The Execution of Catherine Deshayes.'

'The Execution of Catherine Deshayes.' (The Unknown History of Misandry)

Top Image: Illustration depicting Catherine Deshayes, "La Voisin." Source: Misterios en la Red/CC BY NC SA 3.0

By Natalia Klimczak

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Blizzard Opens Up Starcraft To Google's DeepMind AI

popsci.com

POPULAR SCIENCE

Finally, a computer enemy is learning how to win virtual wars

ByKelsey D. Atherton Yesterday at 2:43pm



Starcraft is a game that's simple to pick up, but takes a tremendous amount of practice to master. First step: building additional pylons.

When Starcraft was introduced to the world in 1998, it put stranded humans in a dangerous universe, surrounded by more advanced and more primal foes. The venerable real time strategy series, with a trio of balanced species fighting for survival in a grimdark future, is over 18 years old. The first game and its expansion defined a generation of videogames-as-sports, and the latest incarnations are still played at the highest level. Minute decisions, from resource spending sequence to exact placement of buildings, are studied, scrutinized, and adapted by players for new advantage, creating a thriving, adaptive theater of war.

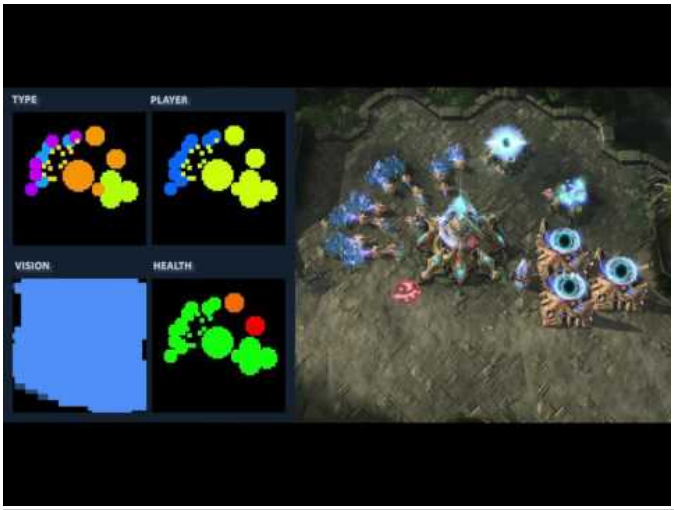
Today, AI itself is getting in on the action. The Starcraft games always shipped with programming that allowed human players to try their hand against automated rivals, but while that AI was toggled to a different difficulty setting, the game was generally the same each time. No, today Blizzard, the makers of Starcraft and its successors, are opening up the game to an AI that *learns*. Specifically, Google's DeepMind.

We've seen DeepMind learn how to navigate mazes, and we've seen it compete against top human players at the strategy game "Go". Mazes are static, and Go has the same fixed board every time, with players taking turns to learn it. Starcraft presents a far more complex task, with two players managing resources, unit production, exploration, and research at the same time, over maps with terrain that can change and be destroyed.

As Google describes it in the release, the agents must demonstrate effective use of memory and planning, but also play within the limits of human dexterity.

For DeepMind to learn the game, it's going to have an API that lets it see the pixels of the game itself. And, like any new player learning the game, it will have tutorial sessions, as it figures out the basics. These are questions like how many pylons to construct (additional ones), should you train units other than marines (only in rare circumstances), and is there anything better than successfully pulling off a zerg rush (no, no there is not). Soon enough, DeepMind could be playing with the best of them, in their bases and killing their dudes.

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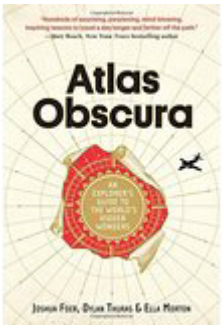


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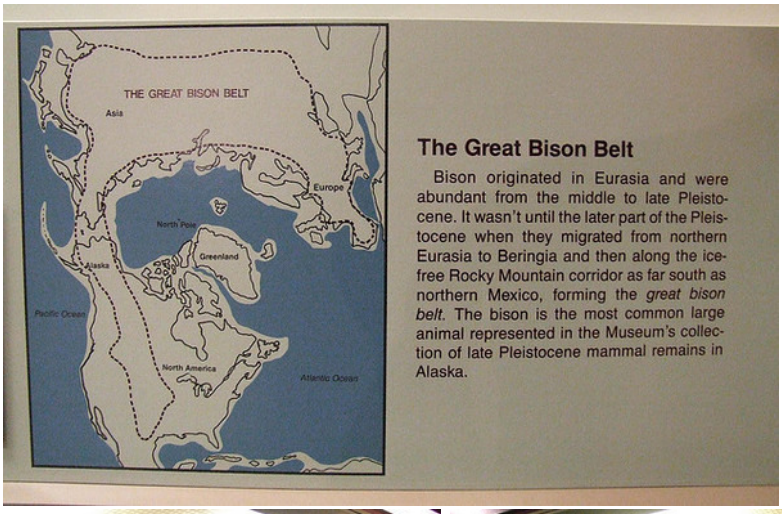
Blue Babe

atlasobscura.com



Mini book

North Americas first frozen mummified remains of an ice age steppe bison, the 36,000 year-old mummy named "Blue Babe"



During the Alaskan gold rush, eager miners used high-pressure water guns to sweep away frozen silt, the possibility of gold right underneath it in the gravel. They often came across the mummified carcasses of large animals, but paid them little mind, tossing them to the side to continue their excavations. In July, 1979, a







busy miner uncovered a pair of bison feet poking awkwardly out of the mud, but instead of working around it, he decided that maybe someone should take a look at his find.

What the miner had uncovered was something remarkable. After it was excavated, a necropsy was performed on the bison by Dale Guthrie of the University of Alaska, and the data from that along with the evidence from the animal's position and nearby peat deposits dated the creature at 36,000 years old.

Blue Babe, named for the metallic blue sheen of the mummified hide, was able to give Guthrie an astounding amount of details about his life and death. Blue's mummy was so well preserved that there was evidence of horns and male genitalia, allowing for sex identification. The horn remnants gave an annual sequence that helped estimate his age, and claw and tooth marks eventually identified the American lion as the source of his demise.

The discovery of Blue Babe's mummy has vaulted our knowledge of the ice-age steppe bison to a completely new level, serving as a shiny blue window into the prehistoric past. The display of the mummy is not the actual full-fledged find – Blue's tanned and treated skin has been removed from the carcass and placed on a plaster replica.

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'Hogan's Heroes' star murder solved?

By Lisa Respers France , CNN Updated 2:17 PM ET, Mon November 14, 2016
2016-11-14T14:45:37Z

cnn.com





Story highlights

- Crane was found murdered in 1978
- A reporter had new DNA testing done

New twist in Hollywood murder mystery

(CNN)The death of "Hogan's Heroes" star Bob Crane has been one of Hollywood's biggest unsolved mysteries for almost 40 years.

Now a reporter may have cracked the case.

Phoenix Fox 10 anchor John Hook has re-investigated the case and on Monday night will reveal his findings on air.

Crane, who played the beloved Col. Hogan in the series, was found bludgeoned to death in his Scottsdale, Arizona, apartment in 1978.

The case captured headlines as it came along with revelations regarding Crane and his sex life, which included videotaping and photographing his sexual encounters with women.

His friend John Henry Carpenter was pegged early on as a person of interest and in 1994 he was put on trial for the murder after the case was reopened.

Carpenter was eventually acquitted and died in 1998. The case was dramatized in the 2002 film "Auto Focus" starring Greg Kinnear and Willem Dafoe.

Now that DNA testing methods have improved, Hook got authorities to release blood samples to him to be retested.

"Blood was found in Carpenter's rental car a day after the murder matching Crane's rare type-B blood," Hook's station told FOX411 in a statement. "When Carpenter finally went on trial in 1994, DNA was in its infancy. Testing at the time was inconclusive on whether the blood came from Bob Crane."

According to Fox411, the results will be revealed "in front of a live panel that will include Crane's son, the prosecutor, the jury foreman and Carpenter's defense attorney."

In a statement provided to CNN, Robert Crane thanked Hook and his team on behalf of his mother, Anne, his stepfather Chuck, sisters Debbie and Karen, and his wife Leslie.

"Although I am not a fan of the word 'closure,' the family hopes Mr. Hook's efforts will successfully bring this case to a close," the statement said. "Either way, to his family, friends and fans, Bob Crane will be 49 years old for eternity. We all miss him."

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Police: Body was under bed for more than a week

2016-10-24 22:39:51

triblive.com

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Living
Multimedia
Obituaries
By Tony Raap | Monday, Oct. 24, 2016, 10:39 p.m.

A Hopewell man is accused of stashing a dead body under his bed for more than a week, telling his roommate the remains were that of a man who died in their apartment of a heroin overdose.

Hopewell police arrested Donald Teaford, 36, last week and charged him with abuse of a corpse, court records show.

Teaford's roommate told a friend about the body, and the friend tipped off police.

Officers obtained a search warrant for Teaford's Mill Street apartment and found the body wrapped in white garbage bags under Teaford's bed, according to a criminal complaint.

Authorities identified the victim as Justin Cogan, 34. His cause of death is pending toxicology tests, Beaver County Coroner David Gabauer said.

Teaford was in the Beaver County jail Monday night.

Tuesday — Oct. 25, 2016

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Danish bog mummy's missing toe returned after 60 years

26/09

thelocal.dk



Danish bog mummy's missing toe returned after 60 years

The Local · 21 Oct 2016, 15:45

Published: 21 Oct 2016 15:45 GMT+02:00

The missing toe of Tollund Man, one of Denmark's best-preserved Iron Age mummies, has been returned after more than 60 years.

The toe, still complete and intact with its mummified toenail, was returned by the daughter of the man responsible for restoring the body, who took it home when it was cut off in the 1950s as part of an experiment in perservation techniques.

Birte Brorson said the toe had been part of her childhood.

"I brought the toe with me to school once to show my classmates," Birte Brorson told The Local. "We read about the Tollund Man, and I said, 'I've got his toe at home'. No one believed me, so I brought it there to show them."

Tollund Man was found in 1950 buried in a peat bog on the Jutland peninsular.

Although he lived and died in the 4th century BC, his features had been so well preserved by the acid in the bog that the people who discovered him at first thought he was a recent murder victim.

According to Brorson the toe was not the only ancient artefact her father brought home.

"My father had all kinds of things lying about: coins from the Gundestrup cauldron, parts of a Viking ship - things that are handed back today," she told TV2.

But she told The Local that it would be wrong to interpret this as theft or souvenir-collecting.

"It's like you taking your computer home when you want to work on the weekend," she said. "The toe ended up with him here and then got lost, and was lost for many, many years."

She stressed that her father, who ended his career as a museum inspector, had been a serious scientist and was not the sort of person who would keep a toe as a joke.

The family found the toe when they emptied their parents' house when her mother was moving into an old people's home.

"We found it in a box where my father kept his tools and things like that," she said. "We thought, 'that's the toe', and put it in a basket to take to my mother's house, and for the last 11 years it was with my mother's belongings."

When they discussed returning it, their mother stopped them. "My mother said to me 'don't give it back to them, they'll just throw it away'," she said.

The father's keeping of the toe is perhaps not as bad as might be supposed, as conservation techniques in the 1950s were not good enough to preserve the whole body, so the forensic examiners decided to only preserve the head and did not keep the rest of the body intact, although some other body parts were preserved.

"That was the feeling we had. 'This is nothing'. At the time we had it bits of the Tollund man was scattered all over Europe."

The Silkeborg Museum created a reconstruction of the body in 1987, which is what visitors can see today together with the original head.

Brorson said she had been surprised by the reaction when she contacted the museum a week ago.

"They were very, very enthusiastic and I didn't expect that. I didn't expect to be called up by journalists. Now it's a very big deal and I'm very happy it is a very big deal. I'm very, very happy that this toe is precious, because I always thought it was."

“We are ecstatic here at the Silkeborg Museum. It's fantastic,” Ole Nielsen, the museum’s director told TV2.

The toe will be presented to the museum on 31 October.

Here is Tollund Man as displayed in the museum:



Here is the eerily well-preserved face, shortly after it was found.



And here is the body at the time of its discovery in 1950.



The Local Europe AB
Östgötagatan 12
116 25 Stockholm
Sweden

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Bones Found 76 Years Ago Could Actually Be Amelia Earhart's

huffingtonpost.com

Researchers believe skeletal remains found in 1940 are "virtually identical" in size ratio to those of the long-lost aviator.

11/01/2016 12:47 pm ET | **Updated** 7 hours ago

Nina GolgowskiTrends reporter, The Huffington Post



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Researchers believe measurements taken of skeletal remains found on a Pacific island are "virtually identical" to those of long-lost aviator Amelia Earhart.

Scientists believe they have gotten one step closer to cracking the mystery of Amelia Earhart's 1937 disappearance.

Measurements indicate that a partial skeleton found on a remote Pacific island in 1940 could have belonged to the pilot, researchers with The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery announced on Oct. 22.

The bones' potential connection to Earhart was dismissed at the time because a British doctor said they belonged to a male. It wasn't until 1998 that TIGHAR reviewed the doctor's records and determined that they appear "consistent with a female of Earhart's height and ethnic origin."

Forensic anthropologists only recently noticed that the forearms of the skeleton seemed to be longer than average, prompting them to study photos of Earhart to try to determine the length of her arms. Her measurements are "virtually identical" to those of the bones uncovered 76 years ago, TIGHAR concluded.

"The match does not, of course, prove that the castaway was Amelia Earhart but it is a significant new data point that tips the scales further in that direction," the nonprofit stated in a release.



Ho New / Reuters

The skeletal remains were found in 1940 on the island of Nikumaroro, then known as Gardner Island. At the time they were dismissed as belonging to a male.

Earhart's exact measurements aren't known, so TIGHAR asked forensic imaging specialist Jeff Glickman to use historical photos of the 39-year-old pilot to estimate her body size, specifically the humerus and radius bones in her arms.

One photo selected for examination shows Earhart facing the camera with her arms at her sides.

The humerus bone discovered on the island of Nikumaroro, then known as Gardner Island, was measured to be 32.4 centimeters long. The radius bone was 24.5 centimeters, giving the arm a ratio of 0.756.

Glickman determined Earhart's humerus-to-radius ratio to be 0.76.

"Statistically, women born in the late 19th century (Earhart was born in 1897) had an average radius to humerus ratio of 0.73. In other words, if the castaway was a middle-aged, ethnically European woman, she had forearms considerably longer than average," TIGHAR stated.

TIGHAR's findings are "compelling" but lack concrete information, Andrew Nelson, an anthropologist at the University of Western Ontario, said Tuesday.

“When calculating ratios, you’re on safer grounds than if you’re trying to estimate absolute [measurement],” he told The Huffington Post of the bones’ estimated humerus-to-radius ratio. “I would like to see what sorts of variability there is around there because there could be a lot of other people out there who have that same measurement.”

That includes people of other races and geographic origins, he said.

Still, he expressed confidence in the researchers’ work, notably forensic anthropologist Dr. Richard Jantz, who contributed to TIGHAR’s findings.

“Jantz himself is well respected and I’d think that he knows what he’s doing,” he said.

Nelson added that it’s “not unusual” for anthropologists to use photos for measurement and comparison purposes.

“Photographs are often used in forensic work to estimate proportions, size, stuff like that,” he said, noting that he has collected facial proportions from photos to narrow down identifications.



Barcroft via Getty Images
This jar on the left was found on Nikumaroro island. It is extremely similar to a product used in the 1930s to prevent freckles, which Earhart had.

TIGHAR has previously suggested that Earhart perished on the island during her famous attempt to become first woman to fly around the world.

Airplane fragments believed to be from her lost plane were recovered in 1991 from the island, which was a bit south of where she was expected to make a stop. Other artifacts found on the island have included a jar believed to be of anti-freckle cream, a woman’s mirror, and buttons and a zipper from a flight jacket.

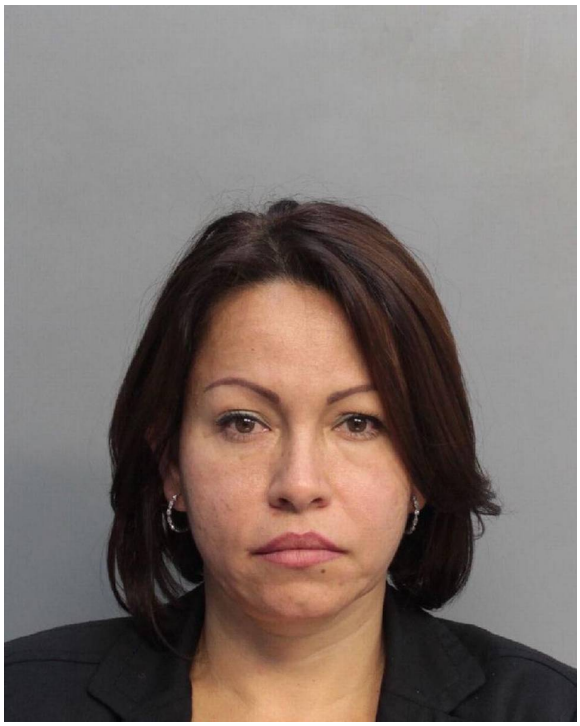
This story has been updated to include additional comments from Andrew Nelson.

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CRIME NOVEMBER 2, 2016 12:08 PM

Mangled penis leads to 40 months in prison for woman who performed illegal surgery



BY DAVID OVALLE
dovalle@miamiherald.com

Mangling a man's penis during a botched illegal surgery will cost a Hialeah woman 40 months behind bars.

Nery Carvajal Gonzalez, 39, pleaded guilty on Wednesday for her role in two ill-fated penis enhancement procedures that took place inside a Hialeah warehouse in 2014 and 2015.

The plea deal is the latest criminal case involving botched cosmetic surgeries in South Florida, a hub for sham doctors who offer cheap cosmetic procedures performed in homes, warehouses and faux clinics.

Another suspected unlicensed clinic doctor, Jose Robusto, is awaiting trial for manslaughter for the death of 28-year-old Suyima Torres, who was injected in the buttocks with a silicone substance and died in April 2013.

Last year, a Hialeah couple pleaded guilty after botched injections that disfigured the rump of a stripper. Most infamously, a Miami Gardens transgender woman named Oneal Ron Morris garnered worldwide headlines for injecting cash-strapped women with a concoction of Fix-a-Flat tire sealant, cement, silicone, mineral oil and super glue. She is facing a manslaughter charge after one woman died in Broward County.

In the penis case, the unidentified victim in his mid-50s used to receive facials from Gonzalez and eventually agreed to the illegal cosmetic procedures.

In early 2014, Gonzalez — who is not a doctor and is not licensed to practice medicine — injected an "illegally obtained" substance into the man's buttocks. A month later, she injected him for a "chin fill," Gonzalez admitted in court documents released Wednesday.

One month later, Gonzalez performed the penis enhancement on the man. He suffered extreme pain and "the inability to have an erection."

Out of "fear and embarrassment," the man continued to get treatment from Gonzalez for the next year in an "attempt to repair the damaged penis."

Finally, Gonzalez turned to a disgraced plastic surgeon named Mark Schreiber to help repair the damage. The second surgery, performed alongside Gonzalez, took place in the same Hialeah warehouse — and was also a failure, police say.

“The victim’s penis looked mutilated and was missing skin and was raw and swollen,” according to court documents. “The penis also had retracted in size and was very small.”

According to prosecutors, Schreiber’s remedy was to tell the man to tie two popsicle sticks his penis to keep it straight while it healed.

“This was the worst experience of his life,” Miami-Dade prosecutor Warren Eth told the judge on Wednesday.

Gonzalez could have faced between 93 months and 35 years in prison had she lost at trial. Under the plea agreement, Gonzalez also gets three years of probation and must testify against Schreiber.

“Nery accepted responsibility for her actions and showed true remorse from the beginning,” said her lawyer, Robert Perez. “Her cooperation with the state allowed her to avoid a stiff sentence and provided a fair resolution for all parties involved.”

Schreiber, who had a long and troubled history of botched plastic surgeries, surrendered his medical license years ago and also served two years in prison for practicing medicine without a license.

He continued practicing medicine covertly, according to prosecutors, and pleaded not guilty last month in the penis surgery case. Schreiber remains jailed while he awaits trial.

MORE CRIME

COMMENTS

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Brisbane bus driver burnt alive by passenger

yahoo.com

October 27, 2016



**

Police in Brisbane have arrested a 48-year-old suspect after a bus driver was burned to death in front of passengers (AFP Photo/Patrick Hamilton)

A passenger doused a bus driver with inflammable liquid and burned him to death in front of horrified passengers in the Australian city of Brisbane on Friday, police said.

There was no apparent motive for the killing of the 29-year-old man named by local media as Manmeet Alisher, a well-known singer in the Indian Punjabi community.

Police superintendent Jim Keogh told reporters "it's a horrific incident here in the quiet suburb of Moorooka."

"This is a rare one where it appears to be no apparent motive.

"A bus driver, going about, doing his business, supporting the community, has had his life taken from him in what is a senseless and needless act."

A 48-year-old suspect was arrested at the bus stop and placed in custody.

Bystanders kicked down the back doors of the municipal bus to rescue passengers, who were "traumatised" by the incident, Keogh said.

"It's lucky the whole bus didn't become engulfed in flames," Keogh said.

Around half-a-dozen passengers were aboard the vehicle and some were treated for smoke inhalation.

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Meet the man with Britain's longest beard at more than 2 feet

16:18, 28 Oct 2016 Updated 16:45, 28 Oct 2016 By Jane Lavender

mirror.co.uk



Dan Rowlands/Mercury Press

Michael has Britain's longest beard

Fuzzy faced Michael Legge has retained his title for the country's longest beard at the British Beard and Moustache Championships in Liverpool.

Factory worker Michael, from Kimberworth, Rotherham, started growing his beard six years ago and it now measures 27 inches.

Joked the father of two: "If I'm going out I can easily take longer than the wife to get ready because I have to wash, dry and oil my beard."

Michael has been crowned Yorkshire beard champ several times and first won the UK's longest bear competition back in 2014.

He has even managed to bag seventh place in the international competition.



Dan Rowlands/Mercury Press

Michael has retained his title



Dan Rowlands/Mercury Press

Michael's beard is more than two feet long

Michael has previously said he only started growing his beard as a bet with his mates.

He added: "It was a bet with some mates to see who could go longest without shaving and one by one they all dropped out. I had no idea where it would lead.

"The next step I'd like to take is to make it a career. I know I'm not going to be the next Brad Pitt, but there's demand for background roles. It's a niche market."

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'Pavarotti paramedic' stuns social media with impromptu opera performance

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Oct. 20, 2016 at 10:25 AM

Paramedic Lewis Quinn belts some opera next to his ambulance. Screenshot: Storyful

KIRKBY, England, Oct. 20 (UPI) -- A British paramedic is dealing with his new-found fame after a clip of him singing opera while in uniform went viral on social media.

Lewis Quinn, 37, a North West Ambulance Service paramedic based in Merseyside, England, earned the nickname "Pavarotti paramedic" when he was filmed singing "*Nessun dorma,*" a song often associated with opera superstar Luciano Pavarotti.

Quinn said he studied music for eight years in the United States before joining the ambulance service. He said he was shocked when the video clip went viral on Facebook.

"Oh my, this was never meant to happen. I've only ever sang for a few colleagues before," Quinn told the Liverpool Echo. "I sing for the patients in the back of the ambulance a lot though, particularly the dementia patients. They can be quite hard to get a response out of sometimes but they enjoy it, and they always tell me if they don't!"

Quinn said he isn't terribly interested in a music career.

"I think an ambulance guy with a really classical voice is just a bit of a novelty for people," he said. "When I moved back to England two years ago I initially got this job just to tread water, but I fell in love with it. My personality doesn't suit pursuing a career in music, for that you have to be very egotistical."

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The Broken Technology of Ghost Hunting

Jeffrey Goldberg

theatlantic.com

The best tools for tracking down spirits have always been the ones fallible enough to find something.



The small, Syracuse, New York-based company K-II Enterprises makes a number of handheld electronic devices—including the Dog Dazer (a supposedly safe, humane device that deters aggressive dogs with high-pitched radio signals)—but it is best known for the Safe Range EMF. The size of a television remote, the Safe Range EMF detects electromagnetic fields, or EMF, measuring them with a bright LED array that moves from green to red depending on their strength. Designed to locate potentially harmful EMF radiation from nearby power lines or household appliances, the Safe Range has become popular for another use: detecting ghosts.

Since its appearance in the show *Ghost Hunters,* where the ghost hunter Grant Wilson claimed that it has been "specially calibrated for paranormal investigators," the Safe Range (usually referred to as a K-II meter) has become ubiquitous among those looking for spirits. Search for it on Amazon, and many listings will refer to it as a "ghost meter," an indispensable tool in the ghost hunter's arsenal. It isn't alone among EMF meters: Of the best-selling EMF meters on Amazon, two out of the top three are explicitly marketed as ghost meters.

Scanning the various product descriptions and reviews, though, what becomes clear is that the K-II Safe Range is a relatively unreliable electromagnetic field meter. It operates only on one axis (you have to wave it around to get a proper reading), and it's unshielded, meaning that it can be set off by a cell phone, a two-way radio, or virtually any kind of electronic device that occasionally gives off electromagnetic waves. The reviewer Kenny Biddle found he could set it off with, among other things, a computer mouse and a camera battery pack.

Yet it's precisely because it's not particularly good at its primary purpose that makes it a popular device for ghost hunters. Erratic, prone to false positives, easily manipulated, its flashy LED display will light up any darkened room of a haunted hotel or castle. Which is to say, its popularity as a ghost hunting tool stems mainly from its fallibility.

The K-II isn't the only consumer-electronic item used by ghost hunters. Often it's sold in kits that contain other devices, such as a Couples Ghost Hunt Kit, with two of everything, so you can build "trust and lasting memories when the two of you, alone in some spooky stakeout, look to each other for confirmation of your findings and reassurance!" There are devices that have been engineered specifically for ghost hunters, like a ghost box, which works by randomly scanning through FM and AM frequencies to pick up spirits' words in the white noise. But mostly, ghost hunters use pre-existing technology: not just EMF meters, but also run-of-the-mill digital recorders, used to capture electronic voice phenomena, or EVP. An investigator records her or himself asking questions in an empty room, with the hope that upon playback ghostly voices will appear.

All of this technology—both the custom and the repurposed—works along more or less the same principle: generating a lot of static and random effects, hoping to capture random noise and other ephemera. The ghost hunter, in turn, looks for patterns, momentary convergences, serendipity, meaningful coincidence. For the believer, this is where ghosts live: in static, in glitches and in blurs.

Ghost hunting was born out of a love of technological failure. In 1861, William H. Mumler, a jeweler's engraver, was studying the new trade of photography when the shadowy figure of a young girl appeared on a plate he was developing. As Crista Cloutier describes in *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult*, Mumler knew it to be an error, a consequence of accidentally reusing a plate that hadn't been sufficiently scrubbed of its previous exposure. But then he showed the curiosity to a Spiritualist friend of his. "Not at that time being inclined much to the spiritual belief myself, and being of a jovial disposition, always ready for a joke," he later admitted, "I concluded to have a little fun, as I thought, at his expense."

He told the Spiritualist that the image was authentic, and that no one else had been around when he'd taken the photograph. His friend took the joke all too seriously, and in short order, Spiritualist publications had reprinted Mumler's mistake as proof of life after death. Mumler himself soon changed his tune, claiming he'd discovered a "wonderful phenomenon that really needed investigation," and began offering to make spirit photographs in earnest. For ten dollars (normal sittings cost about a quarter at the time), he'd take your photo, with the proviso he couldn't guarantee a ghost's materialization.

Mumler's inadvertent invention of spirit photography cemented a connection between ghosts and technology that endures to this day—and specifically, the ways that mistakes and accidents of technology appear as manifestations of the paranormal. Consumer technologies from photography to telegraphy to radio to the internet are almost always immediately seized on by believers as offering further proof of the paranormal. In 1953, three children were watching *Ding Dong School* one afternoon on Long Island when the ghostly face of an unknown woman appeared on the screen. The face would not dissipate, even after the television was turned off, and their father was forced to face the television to the wall "for gross misbehavior in frightening little children," as *The New York Times* reported. The television died completely a day later, but not before its paranormal nature had made it a minor celebrity.

For Friedrich Jürgenson, it was a cassette recorder. In the late 1950s, Jürgenson, a painter and filmmaker, was experimenting with recording birds in his garden; when he played them back, he heard voices on the tape that he claimed belonged to his dead father and wife, calling his name. After several years refining his technique, he published his findings in a 1967 book called *Radio Contact with the Dead.* A few years later, a Latvian psychologist named Konstantin Raudive further developed and elaborated on Jürgenson's techniques, releasing his own book on the science of recording the voices of the dead in 1971.

Raudive's transcriptions included some disturbing messages from the beyond. One voice told him: "Here is night brothers, here the birds burn." Another reported: "Secret reports ... it is bad here." But Raudive confessed that the ghosts didn't always speak so clearly. He claimed that spirits would speak in multiple languages, sometimes in the same sentence. Sometimes they would speak backward. Deciphering EVP became a matter of sifting through any acoustic anomaly that shows up on a tape, however minor or incoherent, and then torturing that noise into some kind of meaning.

Electronic voice phenomena have continued to rank among the most prominent "evidence" offered of paranormal activity, it seems, precisely because humans are hardwired to dredge meaning out of

chaos. Evolutionarily, we have long needed to discern the sight or sound of a predator despite its camouflage, which has led us to look for patterns where they might not be immediately evident. The quirks and shortcomings of technology plays directly into this biological need: throwing out random static and noise that is primed to be transmuted into meaningful signals. Ghost hunters work through confirmation bias. Looking for proof of the paranormal, they will find it in anything, but most readily in static, gibberish, and errata—technological noise in which we're hardwired to find false positives.

The only thing that's changed recently is the proliferation of consumer electronics associated with ghost hunting. In an age of iPhones and Fitbits, ghost hunters are just one more niche market, lapping up the latest and greatest gadgets for sale. But there's one crucial difference: most purveyors of consumer electronics keep their consumers happy by constantly refining them until they're free of bugs. Ghost tech works the other way, by actively engineering glitches—the more, the better.

Such seekers can easily be written off as kooks and outliers, but there's something paradigmatic in their use of faulty devices. The rise of the internet and other new technologies promised a new Information Age, one in which data, truth, and knowledge were the new currency, where the future would be built on information itself. Twenty years on, there's an endless labyrinth of conspiracy theories, fake memes, trumped up stats, and fabricated evidence. The world's knowledge is just a Google search away, but it comes to us inextricably intertwined with the world's bullshit.

The 21st-century media consumer is always working to sift through the noise in search of a signal. Whether it's a cousin's anti-vax Facebook post, the endless Farmville requests that have to be filtered out of a feed, or the colossal avalanche of half-truths and lies dumped during this election, most people's primary challenge online these days is blocking out the endless assault of static, trying to torture it into some kind of meaning.

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Is love worth $100? Brooklyn Bridge padlocks lead to fines

yahoo.com

AP Assoc Press October 7, 2016

NEW YORK (AP) — If you're thinking of attaching a "love lock" on the Brooklyn Bridge be warned: There'll be a price to pay.

New York City officials on Friday announced a $100 fine for proclaiming your undying love with a padlock on the famous span.

Officials removed hundreds of locks and placed signs on the bridge's pedestrian walk warning violators of the fine.

But the signs aren't without humor. One says "No lock, yes lox" with a picture of a crossed out padlock and a bagel and lox.

Last year, 11,000 locks were removed to a tune of $116,000.

The locks are a trend seen around the world. They can pose safety and structural hazards, as happened in Paris in 2014 when a section of bridge fencing collapsed under the weight of the locks.

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Tales from the vault: Brother XII - Seer or charlatan?

timescolonist.com

Stephen Ruttan / The Victoria Times Colonist

December 9, 2012 02:00 AM

Late one night, a retired sea captain had a vision. Edward Arthur Wilson, a 46-year-old Englishman, had retired to the south of France in 1924. In the course of his life, he had travelled the world widely and had studied many traditions. He had long been attracted to the mystical and occult. And now, as he lay in bed, he saw a Tau, the Egyptian Cross, hanging in mid-air.

Over the next few weeks, Wilson had other visions. He felt he was receiving direction from an ancient Egyptian spiritual master. This master was a member of the "Great White Lodge," a body of advanced spiritual beings who directed the world. Wilson, who was a disciple of Theosophy, believed in such masters. Along with other Theosophists, he believed certain people can be selected as spiritual leaders. They receive secret knowledge from the masters, and impart it to others. Wilson was now such an adept. He felt his master was directing him to a special role in the world. He must follow his master's commands.

Little is known of Wilson's early life. Born in England in 1878, he left home at an early age. He spent his life at sea, eventually becoming a captain. He married a New Zealand woman in 1902, and had two children. They lived briefly in British Columbia, before he abandoned them in 1912. After that, we hear nothing of him until 1924.

Such a bare resumÃ© does not suggest a spiritual leader. But his visions changed him. He knew he had to act on his beliefs, and was being directed to do so. His first task was to change his name. The Egyptian master was the 12th brother of the Great White Lodge. In honour of this, and to show that he was his disciple, Wilson assumed the name Brother XII.

His next task was much more complex. He was told to write two books, dictated to him by his master. The first was The Three Truths, a commentary on three truths basic to Theosophy: the unity of all life, the immortality of the soul and the law of karma. The second book was an urgent manifesto, A Message from the Masters of the Wisdom. In this, Wilson reiterated that chaos and destruction were imminent, and that a special "Work" was being prepared by the masters, to be conducted in a special "Ark of Refuge." Individuals would be trained in this "Ark" to provide spiritual enlightenment, and prepare the world for the coming Age of Aquarius.

Wilson arrived in England in 1926. As well as publishing two books, he had written articles for the leading occult magazine, The Occult Review. He discovered he had become well-known in Theosophical and occult circles, and now began to prepare for his life's work. He decided that the "Ark of Refuge" was to be established far from England, on the west coast of Canada. He began to recruit followers. An ad in The Occult Review brought him just a handful of people willing to go. Among them, though, were Alfred and Anne Barley, who were to remain his most loyal disciples until the bitter end. So he set off for Canada.

Wilson, or Brother XII as he became known, began lecturing to Theosophy chapters across Canada. He was very successful, and began attracting many followers. He set up an organization called The Aquarian Foundation and invited people to join.

When Brother XII arrived on the West Coast, he began looking for a place to set up the "Ark." He purchased land on the sea at Cedar, just south of Nanaimo. Already, substantial contributions were coming in, making such a purchase possible. Next, he began a recruitment drive in California. He attracted many new members, and chapters of the foundation were set up in California. Some of the new members were high-profile.

Will Levington Comfort was a well-known writer, and Coulson Turnbull was one of America's leading astrologers. These two, plus occult publisher Joseph Benner and several others, became members of the Aquarian Foundation's first board. Several moved to Canada and lived in the colony.

Brother XII's movement continued to steam ahead. By July 1927, the Aquarian Foundation was able to have its first board meeting. But all was not well.

Certain aspects of Brother XII's conduct were causing concern. For a number of years, he had a "companion" named Elma Wilson, who was regarded as his wife, although they were not legally married. But now Brother XII began an affair with a beautiful young follower, Myrtle Baumgartner.

What particularly bothered some was that he was having sex with her in the "House of Mystery," a building that had been built for spiritual contemplation. When the issue was raised, Brother XII claimed that spiritual leaders were governed by different rules.

The biggest problem was Brother XII's growing authoritarianism, particularly in regard to the foundation's money. He had purchased land at the north end of Valdes Island for the expansion of the colony. Now he was having buildings built on the land, without any discussion with the board.

He seemed to think that his will was law. Some, such as Lev-ington Comfort, saw the drift of things and quit. Others, though, decided to force the issue. Dissident governors took Brother XII to court, charging him with misappropriating thousands of dollars from the foundation.

Brother XII was saved by a new American benefactor, Mary Connolly. She insisted to the court that her large gift was to Brother XII personally, and not to the foundation. The court let him off. Meanwhile, the dissolution of the foundation became a political issue for the provincial government to deal with.

The provincial government came into the picture because of sensational stories in the media. Only the provincial cabinet had the authority to dissolve an incorporated body. They now began to investigate the Aquarian Foundation with this in mind.

Finally, in November 1929, they dissolved the foundation. But no assets were attached to the foundation, so Brother XII was free to use any money that had accumulated. And a great deal of money had been coming in, principally from Connolly and other wealthy disciples.

He converted much of this into gold coins, and packed it away in jars. No one knows how much he stored. But some say it must have been a small fortune. He also acquired a new mistress. In 1929, Mabel Skottowe, a 39-year-old redhead, arrived at the colony with her husband. Brother XII immediately took up with her, and her husband acquiesced.

Brother XII had been in the process of getting rid of Myrtle Baumgartner. He had wanted her to produce an heir, a supposed reincarnation of the Egyptian god Horus. But after two miscarriages that was no longer possible. Eventually, she went back east, and was not heard from again.

At the same time, Wilson was getting rid of his "wife" Elma. She still loved him, despite everything she had had to put up with. But Brother XII shipped her off to Switzerland to organize a foundation chapter. When she came back, he made it plain she was not wanted. She then moved to North Vancouver, and disappeared from the record.

Brother XII was riding high again. As well as salting a fortune away, he was ruling an expanded empire. Connolly bought De Courcy and Ruxton Islands, and gave them to the colony. He built a fine house for himself on De Courcy.

But Skottowe was a sinister force. She renamed herself "Madame Z," and became the "enforcer" for the colony. Brother XII made himself more remote. Life for the colonists became much harsher. Madame Z would move people around from property to property, often for no obvious reason.

Finally, the colonists began to rebel. Brother XII was wily enough to know the game was up. Sometime during June 1932, Brother XII and Madame Z disappeared, and the colonists never saw them again.

The colonists began a court case against Brother XII, to retrieve their money. But when the case got under way, he never showed up. Also gone were the jars of gold coins. He had escaped to eastern Canada, and then made his way to England.

Eventually, in 1935, he went to Switzerland, supposedly for medical treatment. There it was announced that he had died. But few people believed it, then or now. Most saw it as a convenient escape, back to the obscurity he had come from. Certainly, no one found his money.

Brother XII has remained a riddle. Was he originally sincere in his beliefs, but then corrupted by power? Or was he always simply a scoundrel? Too little is known of his background to be sure.

Brother XII wanted to leave his mark on the world. And this, whether he would have liked it or not, may well be it.

Stephen Ruttan is the history librarian with the Greater Victoria Public Library. More Tales from the Vault are available at the library's website, gvpl.ca.

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Brother XII: Occult Leader of a 1920s Bizarre BC Colony

May 11, 2015

bcmag.ca

A self-proclaimed mystic prophet, Brother XII's tale is one of the occult, and it still garners fascination to this day. Egyptian apparitions, epiphanies, an isolated colony, wealthy patrons, adultery, and even Black Magic feature prominently in his life's narrative.



Credit: Image C-05791 via Royal British Columbia Museum

Before Brother XII

Brother XII was born Edward Arthur Wilson, an Englishman who made a career as a sea captain. Little is known about Wilson's early life, except that he was raised in the Catholic Apostolic Church, and that his seafaring travels inspired him to study a wide breadth of world religion. Wilson was known to have had a keen interest in Theosophy and eastern philosophies.

In 1902 he wed a New Zealand woman and together they had two children. The small family lived in British Columbia for a brief period of time which ended when Wilson left them. Nothing is known of where Wilson would spend the next 12 years of his life.

An Egyptian epiphany

While traveling in the south of France in 1924, a vision came to Wilson that would firmly change the direction of his life. He saw before him a Tau, the Egyptian cross, levitating in the air. Other epiphanies came to Wilson and he believed that he was being led by a master. The master was the twelfth brother of the Great White Lodge, a group of spiritual beings that directed the world. To honor his master, Wilson changing his own name to Brother XII.



Credit: See page for author [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons Theosophy Society Seal

Under the direction of his new master, Wilson penned two books – *The Three Truths*, which related to the three basic truths of Theosophy, and a manifesto titled *A Message From The Master Of The Wisdom*. In the manifesto, Wilson wrote about the special work that the masters were performing and pledged he would construct an 'Ark of Refuge' where persons could seek spiritual enlightenment and prepare for the 'Age of Aquarius.'

Running in occult circles

In 1926 Wilson relocated to England and began to establish a reputation in Theosophical circles. He wrote extensively for a well-known occult magazine and began to recruit followers. He was resolute in his mission to build the Ark of Refuge and ultimately decided its location should be the distant shores of Canada's west coast.

Wilson, by then known as Brother XII, traveled across Canada and found success preaching to chapters of Theosophy. He was a charismatic orator and he attracted a healthy following. Encouraged, he established The Aquarian Foundation. Around this time Brother XII was introduced to Joseph Benner, a publisher of occult literature. An ardent supporter of Brother XII, Benner elevated the profile of the Aquarian Foundation and its leader throughout the United States.

Construction of the ark

With substantial contributions from his followers, Brother XII was able to purchase a stretch of land in Cedar (located just south of Nanaimo) for his colony. Patrons were welcome to build homes and cabins on the land.

With the colony established, Brother XII embarked on a speaking tour in the US and even set up chapters of his foundation in California. He attracted many new members and some were quite high profile - such as Will Levington Comfort, a well-known writer, and Coulson Turnbull, a leading astrologer. These two, along with

Benner and several others, formed the first board for The Aquarian Foundation. At its height the Foundation had a membership of 2,000.

In just three short years, Brother XII had achieved extraordinary success – rising to prominence as the leader of a religious organization after leading a relatively wayfaring and unexamined life. But things would begin to spiral out of control and Brother XII could do little to halt the momentum. Some of his behavior was a cause for concern among his followers – Brother XII was caught having extramarital affairs; he was using the organization's magazine to push a political agenda; and many felt he was misusing the Foundation's money.

Trouble in paradise

As controversy and rumors pervaded the organization, some members turned away. Others wanted Brother XII to dissolve the Foundation. Unable to resolve the allegations, Brother XII was taken to court and charged with misappropriating funds. In retaliation, Brother XII charged the Foundation's secretary with stealing $2,800.

A new and wealthy member of the Foundation, Mary Connolly, came to Brother XII's defense. During the proceedings she claimed the funds she donated were for Brother XII's personal use, rather than the Foundation's. Ultimately the court decided to let Brother XII go, and dissolving the Foundation became an issue for the provincial government to handle (as only the provincial cabinet could dissolve an incorporated body.)

Black Magic?

The provincial cabinet began to investigate The Aquarian Foundation, and one court case in particular caught their interest -former employees were suing for back wages. It was during this trial that some truly outlandish and inexplicable behavior took place. An otherwise healthy witness suddenly collapsed as he was about to testify; the judge lost his ability to speak and could only growl like a dog; the lawyer for the plaintiffs became debilitated and could not recall what he was going to say to the court. The judge was forced to dismiss the case, and many people felt Brother XII had used black magic.

After deliberating for a year, the provincial cabinet dissolved The Aquarian Foundation in November 1929. Although the former board members sought to obtain possession of the properties they had invested in, none of the assets were in the Foundation's name. Further, there was no cash to recover as Brother XII had converted all of the Foundation's cash into gold coins.

De Courcy Island, British Columbia, Canada

Madam Z's rein

After disassociating from the women he had previously been romantically involved with, Brother XII took up with a new (and already married) mistress – Mabel Skottowe. Despite the dissolution of the Foundation, Brother XII's wealthy benefactor Mary Connolly, purchased De Courcy and Ruxton Islands and gifted them to the colony. Brother XII set up a house for himself on De Courcy and Mabel took it upon herself to become the colony's enforcer. She was renamed Madame Z and was known to have abruptly relocated residents to different properties as she saw fit. She forced many into hard labour and reportedly carried a long horse whip on her person. Much of her behavior was considered abusive, but many residents remained because of an unwavering faith in Brother XII's cause.

As things continued to deteriorate within the colony, the police became increasingly suspicious. They attempted to visit the islands for one reason or another, only to find that Brother XII had set up armed encampments to keep them away. Colony members went so far as to fire warning shots at approaching boats and Brother XII made sure all resident members were trained to wield firearms.

Into thin air

Between Madam Z's abuses and Brother XII's shady reputation, colonists' tolerance grew thin. They gathered together, drew up a declaration of independence and presented it to their leader. Brother XII was livid but intelligent enough to recognize that he was outnumbered. Sometime in June 1932, Brother XII and Madame Z discretely slipped beyond the colony's perimeter, never to be seen again. Colonists attempted to recoup financial losses through the courts, but Brother XII never appeared when summoned. Besides, all of the money

he had turned into gold had disappeared with him. In 1935, Brother XII reportedly died in Switzerland, but many people believed this to be an all too convenient story to cover his escape.

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Buried Alive with an Undead Corpse! A Medieval Tale

medievalists.net

October 30, 2016 By Medievalists.net

As we do today, medieval people shared spooky stories of the dead rising and haunting the living. There are two versions of a story involving a man named Asmund, who choose to be buried alive with his dead friend. The most horrifying part of this story is how the friend returned as the undead.

The first version of this story comes from *Gesta Danorum*, written by Saxo Grammaticus in the early twelfth-century. Amidst his history of the Danish peoples, Saxo tells of how a man named Asvith had died, and that his friend Asmund asked to be buried with him. So they were entombed into a cave along with a Asvith's dog and horse, and with enough food for Asmund to eat.

Sometime later a Swedish king and his army came upon the cave, and believing there was treasure inside they broke it open. Saxo then writes:

To explore the cave, it was necessary for someone to be lowered into it while tied to a dangling rope. One among the most eager young men was chosen by lot for the task. When Asmund saw the young man being lowered in a basket attached to a cord, he immediately threw him out of the basket and climbed into it himself. He then gave a signal to those who were standing on the surface and holding on to the rope to raise the basket. They pulled the basket up in the hope of great wealth and they beheld instead the unexpected sight of the man they had hauled up. Terrified by his sudden appearance and believing that a dead man had returned to life, they cast aside the rope and fled in all directions. Indeed, Asmund's face was terrifying to behold for it was covered in gore like that of a mangled corpse.

The Swedish king soon came upon the scene, and saw that Asmund's face was scarred, and that his left ear was missing. Asmund then spoke to the onlookers:

"Why are are you so amazed to look upon me, emptied of all color? Truly, any living man becomes diminished among the dead!

Every dwelling in this world is unfortunate and difficult for those on their own; wretched are those who luck has deprived of other people's aid. This cave and empty night and darkness and this ancient hollow have snatched away all pleasure from my eyes and from my soul. This dreadful earth, this rotten tomb, and a heavy tide of foulness have diminished the fairness of my once youthful face, and have sapped the great vigor that I used to have. Beyond all this, I have retained my strength against the undead while struggling against the undead while struggling under great pressure and in considerable peril. Asvith returned from the dead and rushed upon me with tearing claws, returning with Stygian strength to renew fierce battles after his death."

Asmund then goes on to explain that when he was buried with Asvith that the dead man's spirit had returned from hell, and proceeded to eat the horse followed by the dog. Once this was done, the undead figure attacked Asmund, slashing his cheek and tearing off his ear. "But the monster did not escape unpunished," Asmund concludes, "for I quickly lopped off his head with my sword and stabbed his body with a piecing stake."

The second version of the tale, written in 14th century Iceland and part of the saga *The Story of Egil-One Hand and Asmund Berserker-Slayer*. In this version Asmund was friends with another man named Aran. They were very competitive with each other and made a deal: If one of them was to

die before the other, the survivor would put him and his wealth in a burial mound, and would join him for at least nights.

It happened that Aran died, and Asmund buried him with seated on a chair with his full armor. Along with his treasure, a horse, hawk and dog were placed in the chamber. Asmund got his own chair and joined the corpse, having the burial mound sealed up. The saga continues:

During the first night Aran got up from his chair killed the hawk and the hound, and ate them. On the second night he got up again from his chair, killed the horse and tore it to pieces; then he took great bites of horseflesh with his teeth, the blood streaming down from his mouth all the while he was eating. He offered to let Asmund share his meal, but Asmund said nothing. The third night Asmund became very drowsy, and the first thing he knew, Aran had got him by the ears and tore them off. Asmund drew his short-sword and sliced off Aran's head, then he got some fire and burned Aran to ashes. Asmund went to the rope and was hauled out of the mound, which was then covered up again. Asmund took all of the treasures in the mound with him.

You can read this story and more like it in *The Penguin Book of the Undead: Fifteen Hundred Years of Supernatural Encounters*, edited by Scott G. Bruce. **Click here to buy the book on Amazon.com**.

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Daughters tell deputies they ‘panicked,' buried dead father outside Eustis home

wftv.com

- Updated: Oct 20, 2016 - 7:50 PM



http://at.wftv.com/2eyXwpl

EUSTIS, Fla. - The daughters of a Lake County man said they buried their father in the yard of a Eustis home after they “panicked” when they found him dead.

An anonymous tip led deputies to the heavily decomposed body on Parkcrest Drive last month.

Since then, deputies have been waiting on test results to figure out if the body was that of missing 94-year-old Melvin Kort.

Deputies said Wednesday that his two daughters confessed he died four or five years ago from a possible heart attack, and in a panic, they buried his body.

Autopsy results showed the body did not have any signs of blunt force trauma, and the cause of death is still listed as “undetermined.”

Investigators are still working to identify the remains to confirm the daughters’ story and a familial DNA test has been sent to a lab.

Deputies said Kort had a history of mental health issues.

A case file against Susan Kort and Sarah Kort for improper disposal of a deceased body has been sent to the State Attorney’s Office.

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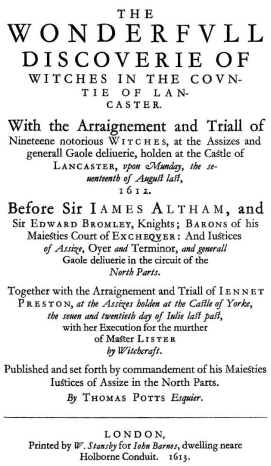
Buried under a boulder: the grave of a Lancashire “witch”



In a pretty churchyard in Woodplumpton, a village not far from Preston in Lancashire, is a mysterious old grave with many dark tales attached to it. A large boulder – terribly out of place among smart Victorian and Edwardian headstones – is said to cover the grave of a witch.



When one mentions Lancashire and witches in the same sentence, the first thing that comes to mind is the tragic tale of the Pendle witches, one of the most famous cases from the hysterical witch hunts of the 17th Century. Ten people, mostly members of two feuding families who lived close to Pendle Hill in east Lancashire, were executed in 1612 after being accused of witchcraft and marched many miles over Lancashire’s hills to go on trial at Lancaster Castle. The testimony of a nine year old girl, Jennet Device, a relative of many of the accused, helped to send the Pendle witches to the gallows and through the widespread coverage of the case the legend of the Pendle witches was born.



THE
WONDERFVLL
DISCOVERIE OF
WITCHES IN THE COVN-
TIE OF LAN-
CASTER.

With the Arraignement and Triall of Nineteene notorious WITCHES, at the Assizes and generall Gaole deliuerie, holden at the Castle of LANCASTER, *vpon Munday, the seuenteenth of August last*, 1612.

Before Sir IAMES ALTHAM, and Sir EDWARD BROMLEY, Knights; BARONS of his Maiesties Court of EXCHEQVER: And Iustices *of Assize*, Oyer *and* Terminor, *and generall* Gaole deliuerie in the circuit of the *North Parts*.

Together with the Arraignement and Triall of IENNET PRESTON, *at the Assizes holden at the Castle of Yorke, the seuen and twentieth day of Iulie last past*, with her Execution for the murther of Master LISTER *by Witchcraft*.

Published and set forth by commandement of his Maiesties Iustices of Assize in the North Parts. *By* THOMAS POTTS *Esquier*.

LONDON,
Printed by *W. Stanby* for *Iohn Barnes*, dwelling neare Holborne Conduit. 1613.

The strange grave at Woodplumpton dates isn’t linked to the case of the Pendle witches – it dates from almost a century later, by which time much of the hysteria around witch hunts had died down – although belief in witches and witchcraft could still be found. The grave is said to be occupied by Meg Shelton, who died in 1705.



It’s impossible to know for certain exactly who Meg was, but it is generally believed that she originally came from the village of Singleton, and later took up residence near Woodplumpton. There are a number of tales about her, most of which involve her shape shifting in order to steal food or cause mischief. By all reports, she died rather a grisly death; crushed against a wall by a barrel. Was this an accident, murder, or one of her own devious plots gone wrong?

Perhaps Meg *was* the sort of person who practiced the black arts, or perhaps she used old-fashioned herbal remedies for innocent reasons, but others viewed this as suspicious. Perhaps she was just a nasty piece of work. Or maybe she was a criminal, the kind of person who today would be served with an ASBO (anti social behaviour order). Perhaps she was disliked by an influential member of the local community who was able to turn others against her. Or perhaps she was just ill, suffering from a condition like schizophrenia or dementia, conditions which



can cause sufferers to behave in ways that are frightening or confusing to others.

One website I found speculated that Meg might have been the mistress of a local lord. The special treatment she received from him might have bred resentment among her neighbours, and – like in the case of the Pendle witches – feuding gave way to accusations of witchcraft, a sure way at the time to discredit someone.

My main question about her grave is this: if Meg was a witch, why was she buried in consecrated ground, so close to a church?



If the stories about Meg are true, the manner of her burial is far from usual. It is said that after her death, she dug her way out of her grave on more than one occasion, which led to her being buried head first, and with a boulder on top of the grave to prevent any further escapes. The tale of Meg digging herself out of her grave seems fantastical, although it’s not entirely out of the question that people may have attempted to disturb or exhume her grave, actions which could have fuelled stories about Meg’s escape.

Over the years, excavated graves in Europe have sometimes been found with their occupants buried face down. In 2014, the skeleton of an adolescent girl was excavated in San Calocero, Italy. The burial is thought to date from the Middle Ages, and she was found to have been buried face down, leading to widespread media coverage describing her as a “witch girl.” The director of the excavation explained that “These rare [prone] burials are explained as an act of punishment. What the dead had done was not accepted by the community.” However, like Meg, this girl was buried in consecrated ground. Perhaps this girl had friends or family members influential enough in the local community to ensure that despite the disrespectful nature of her burial, she was still buried in sacred ground.

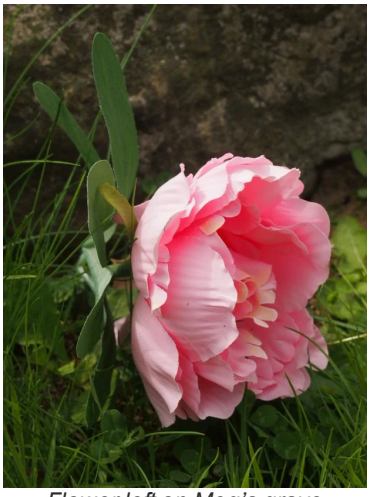
Many people labelled as witches were given unusual burials – archaeologists describe such burials as “deviant burials.” In Fife, Scotland, Lilias Adie (known as the Torryburn Witch), a woman who claimed to have had sex with the devil, was buried under a huge slab of stone on a beach. It’s been speculated that the heavy slab, like the boulder over Meg’s grave, was placed there to prevent Lilias from “escaping.” Such deviant burials were not just reserved for witches – suicide victims were generally buried outside of consecrated burial space, sometimes with stakes through their bodies to prevent their unquiet spirits from rising and terrorising the living.

Since visiting Meg’s grave, I have been searching for other examples of so-called witches being buried in English churchyards. It has not been a particularly fruitful search, although I found some accounts of a witch buried in Brampton, Cumbria, in 1817. Lizzie O’Branton, sometimes called Lizzie Batty or Baty, lived close to the village of Brampton and “acted in a peculiar manner, dressed curiously, and generally ‘acted the part,’ with the consequence that she was credited with many supernatural powers.” (*Bygone Westmorland and Cumberland*, p141) It seems that Lizzie was only referred to as a witch after her death – in her lifetime, she was known as a wise woman, despite her eccentricities. After her death it would appear that stories about her were retold and embellished – there is even a “cursed” tea set associated with her.



Lizzie Baty’s grave in Brampton, Cumbria. Creative Commons image by Alan Cleaver on Flickr .

Perhaps a similar thing happened to Meg after her death – people remembering a strange, mischievous local woman with an odd boulder over her grave started to tell stories of her escapades as a witch.



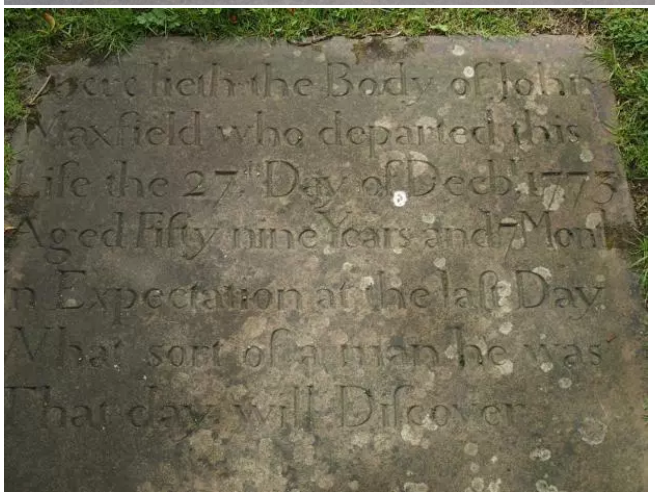
Flower left on Meg’s grave

Meg’s grave still attracts considerable attention today, and many local people are still familiar with the tales about her. When I visited, a pink flower had been left on the grave. People who were once branded as witches – and sometimes killed because of this – are viewed more sympathetically today, with many seeing these people as victims of religious intolerance or misunderstanding of medical problems, or scapegoats for misfortunes that afflicted communities.

An old set of stocks, possibly dating from the 18th Century, can be seen just outside the churchyard.







Meg’s was the oldest grave marker in the churchyard I could find – there were others from later in the 18th Century, but most gravestones dated from the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Visiting Meg’s grave made me feel sad for this unfortunate woman. The apparently deviant nature of her burial – head down – and the heavy boulder above her grave show that she was feared by some members of the community, although the location of her grave in a consecrated churchyard signifies a more respectful burial than many of those accused of witchcraft were afforded; the indignity of an unmarked grave in some lonely, unconsecrated spot. The boulder and the tales attached to it have ensured that Meg’s story – however far from the truth it may have strayed in the three



centuries since her death – has been remembered by the people of Woodplumpton. Unlike those who accused Meg of witchcraft, and those who gave her an undignified burial , we still know Meg Shelton’s name.

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23 comments

1. **Candy Blackham**
August 14, 2015 at 10:08 am

Fascinating!

1. **Caroline**
August 20, 2015 at 5:27 pm

Thank you!

2. **Val** says:
August 14, 2015 at 3:50 pm

Tragically sad~ all these horrific witch trials during James the 1st reign~ but a very interesting post and great photos . Thank you for sharing this ~

1. **Caroline**
August 20, 2015 at 5:29 pm

Thank you! The witch hunts were a very dark chapter of our history, really tragic that fear and intolerance led to people being tortured and killed.

3. **crowthorneboy**
August 15, 2015 at 4:41 am

Just a few miles from Woodplumpton, in the Parish churchyard of St. Leonard the Less [Salmesbury], there is what is reputed to be a ‘Witch’s grave”. Eight 6ft long iron spikes have been driven through the flat gravestone to prevent the ‘Witch” from rising up.

1. **Caroline**
August 20, 2015 at 5:29 pm

Ouch! I wasn’t aware of the grave at Salmesbury, but if I’m in the area I will go and have a look!

4. **runner500**
August 15, 2015 at 10:46 am

Fascinating, as always. Isn’t there a suggestion that one of the Pendle witches may have been buried in an unmarked plot in a churchyard?

1. **Caroline**
August 20, 2015 at 5:31 pm

Thanks! There are stories about a grave belonging to the Nutter family at Newchurch in Pendle – it’s been suggested that Alice Nutter might be buried there, although I can imagine it would have been tough to get her body back there all the way from Lancaster.

5. **Graeme Stewart**
August 15, 2015 at 1:11 pm

I’ll bear this in mind for my mother in law…

Once again, a fascinating, and obscure piece of history.

1. **Caroline**
August 20, 2015 at 5:31 pm

6. **hocuspocus13**
August 16, 2015 at 6:44 pm

Reblogged this on hocuspocus13 and commented: jinxx♠xoxo

7. **Sonny Bramblett**
August 17, 2015 at 4:17 am

Great story! Keep up the good work, Caroline.

1. **Caroline**
August 20, 2015 at 5:31 pm

Thank you!

8. **Jessica (Diverting Journeys)**
August 19, 2015 at 2:38 pm

Very interesting story! I’d love to check out this churchyard the next time I find myself up north!

1. **Caroline**
August 20, 2015 at 5:31 pm

Thank you!

9. **Amanda June Hagarty**
August 22, 2015 at 6:46 am

Fascinating. The story of her strange burial made me think of ancient Celtic sacrificial burials. Weren’t there some that were buried feet first beneath buildings or something, to ward of ill luck? I wonder if something of that lingered.

10. **michaelroberts4004**
October 20, 2015 at 6:55 pm

Reblogged this on Peddling and Scaling God and Darwin and commented:
Article on the church I am taking services at during the present time.

11. **michaelroberts4004**
October 20, 2015 at 6:56 pm

I’ve re-blogged this as I am taking the services there every sunday at present

12. **Amy Pilgrim**
October 26, 2015 at 1:11 pm

Very interesting reading. Thank you!

The UK isn’t the only place with a sordid and embarrassing history of “witchcraft mania.” The United States has its own black mark against her with the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. Anything out of the ordinary, or anything not quite like the “standard” was considered witchcraft, and not tolerated. I’m glad the 21st Century is more tolerant of people’s unique qualities.

Good job, Caroline!

13. **Barb Drummond**
December 10, 2015 at 6:43 pm

Reblogged this on texthistory and commented:
A very curious burial.

14. **Catherine Hokin (@cathokin)**
January 17, 2016 at 10:30 pm

Great post about a strang time in our history

1. **Caroline**
January 30, 2016 at 12:15 pm

Thank you!

15. **Barb Drummond**
April 28, 2016 at 5:38 pm

The stone may have been a grave robber stone, usually to prevent resurrection men getting the body for dissection, but it may be that locals objected to her being in consecrated ground and wanted her interred elsewhere. I read somewhere about face-down burials – some were accidental, ie they had bounced around in the coffin en route to the burial ground, ending up face down..

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'C U in the NT' tourism slogan causes social media stir

By Jacqueline Breen
about 5 hours ago Mon 7 Nov 2016, 5:46pm

abc.net.au

ABC News

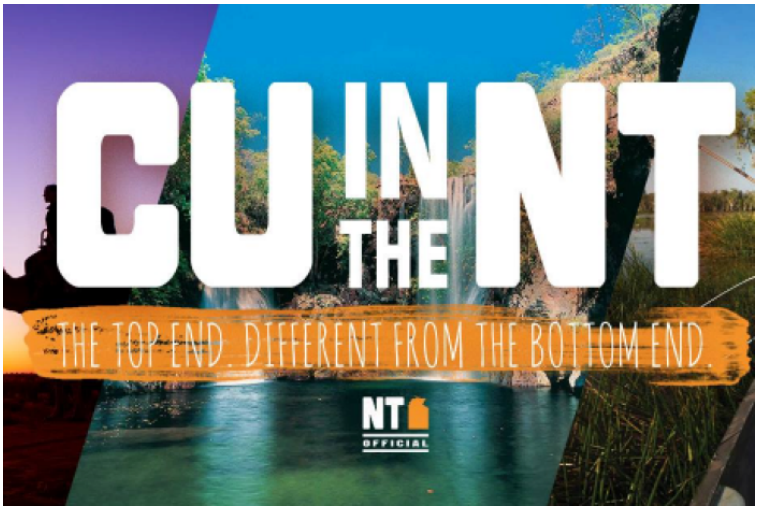


Photo: The mystery creators behind the 'C U in the NT' campaign say they want to market the Territory to younger travellers. (Supplied: Facebook.)

'C U in the NT' tourism slogan causes social media stir

Could a swear word breathe new life into the Northern Territory tourism industry?

It is an unconventional strategy but there are signs it is paying off for the mystery creatives behind the "C U in the NT" logo.

The controversial design surfaced online late last week and it has rippled across social media and generated international coverage.

It is not affiliated with the government body Tourism NT, which, along with other industry groups, has been working to reverse a decline in tourist numbers which have not improved since 2000.

Requests for interviews with the people behind the brazen slogan were met with an automated message apologising that staff were "flat out like a lizard drinking".

An 'embarrassment' or good marketing?

Social media users have had a range of reactions to the campaign.

Philip called it a "clever campaign" and said:

> "I didn't know what or where the NT was before the media picked this up."

Renee declared that "this page is an absolute f**king embarrassment".

Annalise asked "what Elders you consulted or granted you permission to use Uluru, with this slogan plastered over it". The post that featured Uluru has since been removed.

Eric said: "Grow up. Don't base your marketing on lady parts and shocking words when you have a spectacular natural environment to share."

Others tagged friends in the photo posts and made suggestions about travel plans.

An 'independent underground campaign'

In response to questions about its Uluru post, a campaign spokesperson said: "This campaign was born out of love for the Northern Territory and its people. We have removed any images that may be deemed offensive out of respect."

But while other questions remain unanswered, a media release described their efforts as an "independent underground campaign" by "a guerilla group of people" designed to market the Territory to younger travellers.

As well as posts on Facebook describing tourist attractions in the Territory, the group has a sophisticated website where it sells merchandise.

T-shirts and singlets are on sale bearing a design that shares strong similarities with the official Tourism NT design.

The media release also contained a reassurance that merchandise orders would be fulfilled and delivered, perhaps for anyone who harboured doubts about the group's professionalism or reliability.

AEDT = Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time which is 11 hours ahead of UTC (Greenwich Mean Time)

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California woman's tiny home stolen

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Oct. 12, 2016 at 3:41 PM



Thieves in California drove off with a woman's tiny $50,000 tiny home. The home had been under construction for three years before it suddenly disappeared as owner Malinda Crichton was walking her dog. Screen capture/CBS Sacramento/Inform Inc.

SACRAMENTO, Oct. 12 (UPI) -- A California woman was shocked when she return from walking her dog to find that thieves had driven off with her home.

Malinda Crichton returned from her walk to find her 13-feet tall by 33-feet long by 8-feet wide "tiny home" had disappeared, according to KCRA.

"I let my little dog out, and I was totally shocked because my house was gone," she said.

Crichton became even more worried when calls to her landlord and local towing agencies produced no information about the location of her home.

"I was like, 'Oh God, this is serious.' I don't know who did this. I have no idea. So that's when it got scary," she said.

Crichton eventually contacted West Sacramento Police Department, who were baffled by the odd case of theft.

"I've never heard of a tiny home theft until now," Sgt. Roger Kinney said. "Certainly with house prices going up we're hoping that this trend doesn't also go up."

After asking around Crichton, eventually learned from a neighbor that her home had turned up near a local market.

"I don't know if whoever stole it didn't have a big enough truck," she said. "I don't know if they were drunk and a few blocks away were like, 'Wait, this actually isn't a good idea.' How do you hide a tiny house?"

Crichton spent about $40,000 on the home since she began constructing it in August 2013 and told FOX 40 it would cost about $50,000 by the time it was complete.

"This is for me to live in so that I don't have to worry about rent. I don't have to worry about mortgage. I'm a singer and a musician, so this is going to allow me to follow my passions," she said.

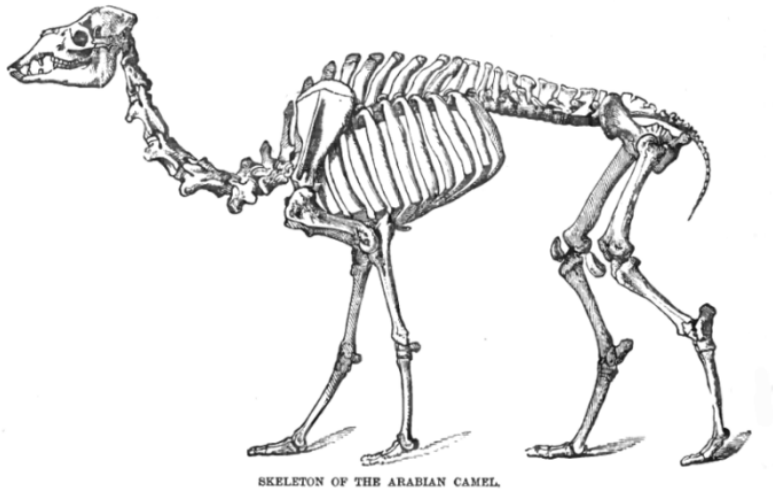
Police are still investigating who was responsible for stealing Crichton's home.

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Halloween Horror Post #10: The camel-riding corpse that killed a woman

strangeremains.com

By strangeremains*on*October 31, 2016 • 0



Skeleton of a camel from the Royal Natural History Volume 2. Image credit: Wikipedia

In the spring of 1883, a coroner was dispatched to investigate the gruesome death of a woman on a sheep ranch in eastern Arizona. The only witness to the killing was a woman who barricaded herself inside a ranch house during the attack. According to her, when the men left with the herd the two women and their children gathered in the house. The unfortunate woman had gone down to a nearby spring to gather some water. The witness heard screaming a short time later and looked out of the window. She described the assailant as "red, very tall and ridden by a devil."

The coroner found trampled brush and huge hoofprints at the death scene. The woman's body was covered in injuries consistent with a death caused by crushing blows. The coroner, however, didn't believe the witness' story about a demon in the saddle of a red specter. But without any further evidence he didn't have any other choice but to rule the "death in some manner unknown to the jury."

This devilish apparition became known as the "Red Ghost" and people all over the Arizona territory told stories about this apparition. Folks claimed that it was 30 feet tall and would disappear before their eyes when chased. But the next credible story came from a hunter named Si Hamlin a few weeks after the death at the sheep farm.

Si Hamlin, sometimes also referred to as Cyrus Hamblin, was in the Salt River area of Arizona when he spotted the "Red Ghost" through the brush. He got close enough to see that it was a camel with something large on its back. He thought the camel's cargo might be a man but he didn't get close enough to be sure before it disappeared into some trees.

What was a camel doing in Arizona?

When Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War (1853-1857) he advocated for the creation of a Camel Corps in the Army. Davis believed that camels would help with the westward expansion through the Southwest because of their ability to carry large loads through arid environments. Congress approved of the Camel Corps in 1855 and by 1857 the Army purchased 75 camels. They were stationed at Camp Verde in Texas and were used to transport supplies. The camels weren't used for long. By 1864 the Camel Corps had been disbanded and the camels were sent all over the Southwest. Some ended up with the Confederate Army when they seized Camp Verde, some were sold to zoos, some were used by mining companies to haul supplies, and others were just turned loose to roam the desert.

The Camel Corps explains the presence of a rogue ungulate terrorizing the people that lived in the Arizona desert. *What could explain the presence of the "demon" on its back?*

The answer to this question came about a month after the Si Hamlin sighting. Early one morning, two prospectors were working in the Verde Valley when they saw a red camel grazing on the mesa. The miners fired at it and missed. When the poor animal jumped and ran off something fell to the ground. They found that it was "a man's head, dry and withered, but with flesh and hair still on it."

The "Red Ghost" that tormented Arizona turned out to be nothing more than the decaying corpse of an unidentified man strapped to a camel. As the days passed, and the body decomposed further, more parts fell away.

About a month after the two prospectors shot at the camel, a cowboy spotted the "Red Ghost" in his branding corral. He approached it on his horse and tried to lasso the animal. The camel charged and nearly killed the cowboy. Although the animal ran off, the cowboy got close enough to see the dwindling remains of a corpse on its back.

This was the last sighting of the "Red Ghost" for the next ten years. Then in 1893 a rancher named Mizoo Hastings saw a scarred, red camel grazing in his garden. This time the "Red Ghost" would not escape. Hastings fired his rifle and killed the camel. By 1893, nothing remained of the corpse, though the animal bore the scars from the leather straps that once kept the body in place.

The "Red Ghost" might have been nothing but a ghost story told to scare people around a campfire. But this gruesome apparition could have been an unfortunate camel with a corpse strapped to his back.

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Canada church's baby Jesus statue turns heads - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC

By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring



Image copyrightRadio Canada

The two-tone look will only be temporary - a stone replacement is planned for next year

A statue of the baby Jesus in an eastern Canada churchyard has been attracting attention after undergoing an unusual restoration.

The white stone statue's head went missing from outside Sainte Anne des Pins church in Sudbury last year, but it's now been replaced by a local artist - using bright orange clay. "It really is shocking to the eyes because of the big contrast in colour," Father Gerard Lajeunesse tells CBC News.

The church struggled to find anybody who would help fix the headless statue after it was vandalised, until artist Heather Wise offered to create a temporary replacement. She told the local Sudbury.com site earlier this month that she plans to carve a permanent head for baby Jesus in stone next year.

Father Lajeunesse has said he's grateful to Ms Wise for acting "out of the goodness of her own heart". He tells CBC that some parishioners have been surprised or disappointed with the statue's new appearance, but replacing the whole thing would have cost up to 10,000 Canadian dollars ($7,500; £6,200). "It's a first try. It's a first go," he says. "And hopefully what is done at the end will please everyone."

Comments on the CBC story range from the amused - a few see a striking similarity to cartoon character Maggie Simpson - to the offended, although some say the artist shouldn't be criticised for making a sincere effort. Others liken it to a now infamous incident in Spain, when an elderly parishioner attempted to restore a fresco of Jesus Christ but ended up botching it.

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The story of Canada's most famous ghost town is becoming a musical

2016/10/29 cbc.ca

CBC CBCnews
cbc masthead logo

Kitsault, B.C. was built, settled and abandoned in 3 years — and stands to this day

By Justin McElroy, CBC News Posted: Oct 29, 2016 9:00 AM PT Last Updated: Oct 29, 2016 9:13 AM PT


A photo of Kitsault as it was under construction in the early 1980s.

- Energy plan for B.C. ghost town to be unveiled

"September 1982, in the mountains of Northern B.C., there's a town that was built for me.

"For me. For me. For me."

*(*Opening to *Kitsault: The Musical)*

When Carl Pucl saw a short TV clip about a community in northwest British Columbia that was centrally planned, built and deserted in the space of three years — and preserved ever since — he was immediately intrigued.

"They really didn't show anything about the people who lived there. Just the abandoned buildings," he said.


Homes in Kitsault, B.C. (Chad Graham)

The abandoned buildings of Kitsault have been the subject of dozens of stories throughout the years. People have looked at the empty community, surrounded by mines, mountains and a deep-water port, and seen tourism and economic opportunities.

Pucl, however, saw a musical.

"When you're growing up on the other side of the country, you really don't have an idea of what a mining town in B.C. looks like," he said.

"Kitsault represents an amazing Canadian story that has not been told yet."

For two years, Pucl and his co-creator Doug Price have been writing songs, conceiving scenes and criss-crossing the country.

Now, they hope to workshop the story of Canada's last ghost town within a year.

"When we started, we didn't have any kind of clear vision of what the story was. But we kept looking at these pictures of abandoned buildings, and we kept wondering, 'What happened here?'" said Pucl.

"Most ghost towns, you don't really know their history, you don't know the people who used to live there, and that's why there's this ghostly feel. But Kitsault is almost a spirit town, because the people who used to live in Kitsault are still around."



Kitsault Times

VOL. 1 NO. 1

KITSAULT, BRITISH COLUMBIA

APRIL 1981

Our town: a new and exciting community

This is the first edition of the newspaper that serviced the ghost town of Kitsault, B.C. John Sanders, the mine manager, graced the cover.

'The company just built a town ... for everyone'

John Sanders had worked in Port Hardy for Amax Canada for many years when, in 1979, the mining company offered him an intriguing promotion.

The pitch? With the price of molybdenum booming, they asked Sanders to manage a large mine they were going to reopen, and oversee all hiring and production.

The catch? There were no roads, no homes — and the nearest major community, Prince Rupert, was a four hour drive away.



This is what the town of Kitsault, B.C., looked like as it was under construction in the early 1980s. (Kitsault Resort)

"Kitsault might have been one of the last live-in towns, and it was fly-in, fly-out to start out with," said Sanders, who was intrigued by the untraditional opportunity.

"That's not the easiest sell to sharp tradesmen, accountants, engineers who wanted to work there. So we thought, 'How do you keep people there?'" The solution, he said, was to build a $43 million community, complete with everything a modern 1980s suburban society would want.

"The company really just built a town. Like, for everyone," said Brad Halkier, who was hired straight out of medical school to be one of two doctors in Kitsault.

"They didn't just build a medical clinic, but they built schools, and apartment buildings, and a rec centre, a curling rink and swimming pool and shopping mall. This was going to be a 25, 30, 40 year project."

As mine manager in a company town, Sanders was nominally the mayor. But he said the governing of Kitsault was generally communal in nature.

"The company ran the physical plant, the roads and everything, but the town as a social organisation had sort of mayors of the moment. Whatever activity was being developed, or which one was focused on right now, the club leader or interested person would essentially be the mayor."

With everyone in Kitsault moving there at virtually the same time, for the same reason, and expecting to stay for a long time, the end result was neither Lord of the Flies style anarchy or small town intrigue, but instead a sense of shared purpose, said those who lived there.



The town of Kitsault had approximately 1,200 people before it was shut down by Amax Canada in 1982. (Kitsault Resort)

"Conflict just didn't happen," said Halkier, who on various days doubled as the town's ambulance driver, veterinarian, or in the rare case, priest.



The hospital in Kitsault, B.C., is still preserved to this day. (CBC)

"You'd think okay, small town, there's going to be problems with drinking or violence — we didn't even have police there, for goodness sake! There were incidents, but they were very, very rare," said Sanders.

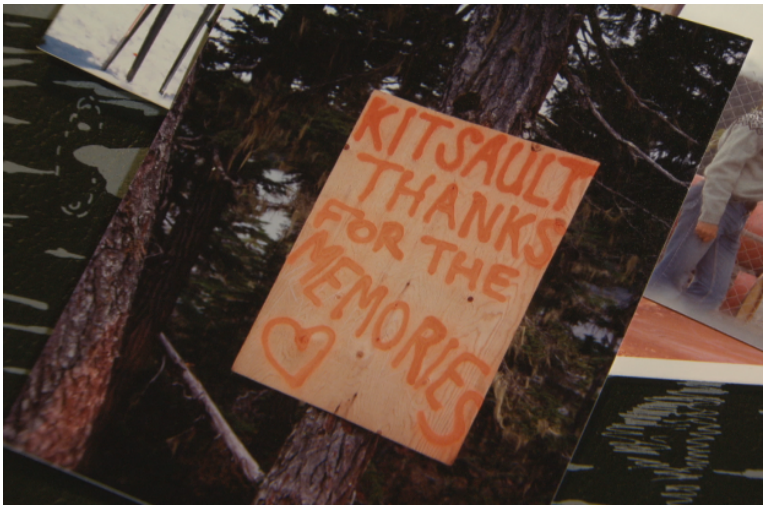
"People, they did their thing, and it seemed, without having a great long list of municipal rules and regulations, people just behaved."

But just as quickly as Kitsault was born, it died.

"It was a tough go, because the prices of molybdenum started to fall even during construction," said Sanders.

"The U.S. mines were under tremendous stress, and the cash flow of the company was at risk, but I hoped people had lost sight of the fact there was this little mine in B.C. chugging this stuff out."

Unfortunately for Kitsault, they hadn't. Rather than shutter one of their larger mines in America, Amax decided Kitsault would close immediately. Within a few months, the site was once again empty.



This sign thanked people as they left Kitsault, B.C. for the last time after the town was abandoned.

It was the last in a long line of British Columbia towns that was founded because of a natural resource, and abandoned for the same reason. Today, if a company wants to mine, drill or do fracking in a remote part of the province, they'll build a work camp, and fly in employees on short-term contracts.

"You don't see people building towns," said Sanders, with more than a tinge of melancholy in his voice.

"How much can you justify building a great big town with a finite life? Do the conservation ethics of society tell us, do you really want to do that? Pave all those roads, build all those houses, when you've got a finite life here?"

Still, he never regrets the Kitsault experiment. "It makes great economic sense to minimize the infrastructure costs. You're much better off flying people in and out," he said.

"But you'd never have Kitsault. You'd never have those memories. None of us would ever have that experience."

VIDEO: The newest owner of Kitsault, Krishnan Suthanthiran, bought the town last decade and has dreams of turning it into an LNG facility.



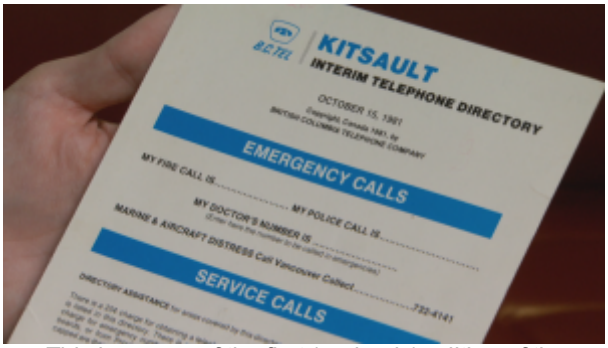
'He could do a thesis on this'

When Pucl learned of Kitsault, he knew nothing about that unique experience, but knew capturing it was necessary if he was going to write a musical with emotional resonance.

"It was really important for us to get the story right. We didn't necessarily know who occupied these homes. We wanted to connect with as many people as possible," he said.

"When you're looking at the story, which is a true-life story, there's a responsibility we have as artists to tell the story in a true-life way. But when you're looking at people's stories, which story do you tell?" To do that, Pucl began a quest to talk to as many people who lived in Kitsault as possible — and collect mementos many had kept from their brief but memorable time there.

A yearbook from the school. A phone directory from BC Tel. Candid photos and intimate diaries. He secured the life rights to the stories of more than 60 people who made Kitsault home.



This is a copy of the first (and only) edition of the Kitsault phone directory.

"He showed me the research work he'd done, and I was flabbergasted. Astonished," said Sanders, who was originally reluctant to talk to Pucl.

"He could do a thesis on this. I don't know that an insider would have ever done this research. 'Great memories, too bad it's over.' He said, 'No, there are lessons to learn beyond that. Why did it turn out that well? What were the factors?'"

The documents given to Pucl not only helped him track down nearly every person key to Kitsault's formation and gave him plenty of resources to develop the musical — they reopened memories and friendships for people who lived there.

"It's allowed me to revisit it in my own mind again. It's been great, and I've been grateful for that," said Halkier.

'Let us toast to all the toasts we've made'



People from Kitsault, B.C., who had the last drink at the town's Maple Leaf Pub signed a copy of a plaque.

The story of Kitsault ended with people leaving the town over the course of several weeks — but that's not exactly the best ending for a piece of drama.

"It is this Titanic story. You know exactly how it ends, so how do you tell it?" said Pucl.

Fortuitously, when talking with a person who was Sanders' secretary, he came across another artifact — a framed piece of paper saying, "We had the last drink in the Maple Leaf Pub," with the signatures of dozens of people who did just that.



The Maple Leaf Pub still stands in Kitsault, B.C. (Chad Graham)

"Many people have told us they didn't want to finish that last little bit of drink they had, because they knew once they did, once they took that sip, that Kitsault was over. That's a gift to an artist, of everyone cheering for the last time, and that's it," said Pucl.

That's how the musical ends: with people slowly leaving the pub one final time. But there's still a ways to go until Pucl and Price's musical actually begins, and few people would bet the farm on a Canadian ghost town musical.

Still, you could say the same about a hip-hop recounting of how a Caribbean orphan became one of America's founding fathers, or a dance-filled adaptation of a few T.S. Eliot poems about felines.

And even if *Kitsault: The Musical* befalls the same fate as Kitsault the town, those that remember their time in the most unique of Canadian communities are grateful for what they have done.

"I have no idea what the musical will be like, and honestly, it doesn't really matter to me," said Halkier.

"What matters to me is this happened."

CBC

Radio-Canada

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Canadian Fishermen Caught Fabled 650-Pound, Century-Old Sturgeon

smithsonianmag.com

Nicknamed “Pig Nose,” the fish was quickly released back into the wild



<img src="http://thumbs.media.smithsonianmag.com//filer/9f/a3/9fa328cebe-4325-8765-8908dd631e77/image1.png__800x600_q85_crop.jpg" alt="pig nose 1" itemprop="image">

"Sturgeon Whisperer" Nick McCabe with his catch, the 650-pound "Pig Nose" (River Monster Adventures)
By Danny Lewis
smithsonian.com
August 26, 2016

For decades, an enormous sturgeon known as “Pig Nose” has eluded fishermen in British Columbia. Named for its stubby nose, lopped off at the tip at some point during its long life, the massive sturgeon was a dream catch for fishermen up and down the Fraser River. Now, after decades of avoiding hooks and lures, a group of fishermen finally reeled the enormous beast out of the depths, Cara Giamo reports for *Atlas Obscura*.

Nick McCabe is a tour guide with River Monster Adventures, a company based out of Lillooet, B.C. that specializes in taking fishermen on trips up and down the Fraser River searching for sturgeon. It’s been decades since the last time Pig Nose was sighted, but earlier this week, McCabe and a tour group nabbed the enormous fish. After two hours of struggling, they finally wrangled Pig Nose out of the deep waters. The legendary fish is more than 10 feet long and weighs 650 pounds.

“We’re walking on clouds,” Jeff Grimolfson, another guide with River Monster Adventures, tells Erika Tucker for *Global News*. “This fish has been the talk of fishing and sporting goods shops for years.”



"Pig Nose" got its name from its identifying injury, which sheared off the tip of its nose sometime during the last 40 years. (River Monster Adventures)

It might seem crazy, but at one point it was a fairly common sight for sailors and fishermen in North America to spot giant sturgeon swimming up and down rivers. Relics of prehistoric eras, sturgeon have been around since the days of the dinosaurs, according to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

While they might look a bit like smooth-skinned sharks, sturgeon are bottom-feeders that scrape riverbeds and lake bottoms with their snouts. It’s common for them to live about 60 years, and at one point fishermen throughout Canada and the United States often spotted 100-year-old sturgeon as they traveled up and down the rivers of the New World.

Early on, sturgeon were so plentiful throughout North America that they were a common sight in fishing boats and on dinner plates. In New York’s Hudson River Valley, where three of the world’s 26 species of

sturgeon are found, the fish were so ubiquitous that it was nicknamed “Albany Beef” after the state capital. They often grow to be about 10 feet long and can weigh an average of 100 pounds, so a single fish meant a lot of meat.

The sturgeon’s long life, however, means it also takes a long time for them to reach sexual maturity. It can take the big fish about 20 years to start mating, so their population can rapidly dwindle. Between overfishing and increases in traffic and pollution, some sturgeon species were pushed to the brink of extinction. Many species are now protected throughout the United States and Canada.

Luckily for Pig Nose, all of River Monster Adventures’ sturgeon-fishing trips are catch-and-release. After posing for a few photos and having its measurements taken, the giant sturgeon was sent back into Fraser River to await the next hook.



September 2016 magazine cover

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This Canadian just swam by riverboard nearly 2,000 miles down the Yukon River adn.com

Alaska Dispatch News

Monday, August 15, 2016

This Canadian just swam by riverboard nearly 2,000 miles down the Yukon River

- Author: Lisa Demer
- Updated: 16 hours ago
- Published 3 days ago



Denis Morin swam, with a riverboard, from Whitehorse, Yukon, to Emmonak, Alaska, near the Bering Sea, between May 25 and Aug. 9, 2016. (Denis Morin)

A few days ago, at the end of a summerlong journey in which he navigated nearly the entire Yukon River without a boat, Denis Morin was overcome by all he was and all he had been through.

The French-Canadian traveled the river from Whitehorse, Yukon, to the mouth in Alaska by riverboard. The bright blue board is a little more than half his height in length, and looks something like a boogie board with sides. He kicked and sometimes stroked for almost 2,000 miles. He encountered big rain and hail, headwinds and whitecaps, two grizzly bears and an errant salmon.

And he did it alone.

Morin, 54, calls himself a swimmer. More precisely, he is a riverboarder, an athlete in an emerging sport of swimming aided by a floatation board and fins. Thousands of people around the world do it, said Morin, who is part of the World Riverboarding Association. Most are thrill-seekers in whitewater with extra protective gear. The Yukon was for distance.

After 75 days and almost 2,000 miles, on Tuesday he rose out of a slough at his destination: the Southwest Alaska fishing village of Emmonak, near the Bering Sea at one of the Yukon's mouths.

There, local salmon roe man Jim Friedman heard that a stranger had just arrived. He went to the dock by the fish plant to see if the man needed help.

"Where's your canoe?" Friedman asked.

Don't have one, Morin answered.

"Where's your kayak then?"

Morin didn't have one of those, either.

"Then how'd ya get here?" Friedman wondered.

"I swam," Morin told him.

A first for the Yukon

Canoeists, rafters and other explorers have tackled the Yukon before. But residents of river villages say they don't know of anyone else who traveled Alaska's longest river without a boat or paddle.



Denis Morin swam, with a riverboard, from Whitehorse, Yukon, to Emmonak, Alaska, between May 25 and Aug. 9 2016. This image is made from a GoPro mounted to his cargo. As Morin swam the upper reaches of the Yukon River, he towed his camp, food and other supplies. (Denis Morin)

Denis Morin swam, with a riverboard, from Whitehorse, Yukon, to Emmonak, Alaska, between May 25 and Aug. 9 2016. This image is made from a GoPro mounted to his cargo. As Morin swam the upper reaches of the Yukon River, he towed his camp, food and other supplies. (Denis Morin)

"We see canoers all the time but this is the very first time anybody even attempted to swim like that, swim that far anyways," said Paul Larson of Russian Mission, who encountered Morin there.

Morin took on the adventure with lots of experience, two gear-stuffed inflatable waterproof packs and a desire to reset himself.

Morin, a French-speaker from Quebec City, retired earlier this year from a high-pressure information technology career. He sold everything. He wanted to start anew.

"I said, 'OK, I will swim the Yukon River.' "

On this solo expedition, he set out to shed that workaday world and open a chapter of travel, enjoyment and adventure.

"I think it was more about changing my rhythm of life," Morin said.

He had big trips behind him, among them riverboarding the wide George River in northern Quebec, a monthlong solo journey on the dramatic Nahanni River in Canada's Yukon and Northwest territories, and a group trip in Nepal.

His Yukon trip may be the third longest riverboarding adventure on record. A Swiss man, Mike Horn, holds the record, for a 1977 journey down the Amazon River and a French explorer, Remi Camus, in 2014 went about 2,700 miles down Southeast Asia's Mekong River.

For the Yukon, Morin took 130 pounds of gear, including fuel, a stove, dehydrated meals, a tent, rainwear and a small computer.



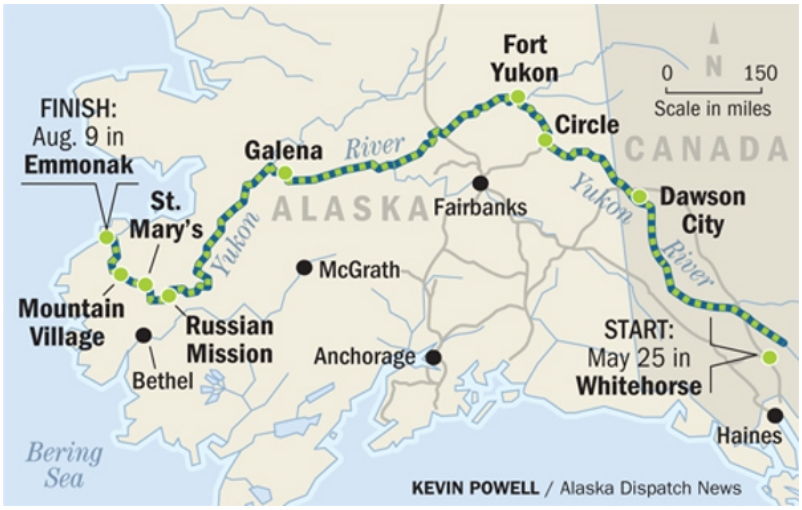
When Denis Morin arrived at the trans-Alaska pipeline span across the Yukon River and the Dalton Highway bridge, he inventoried his food stores. (Denis Morin)

When Denis Morin arrived at the trans-Alaska pipeline span across the Yukon River and the Dalton Highway bridge, he inventoried his food stores. (Denis Morin)

He crafted his own riverboard of dense foam covered in fiberglass with an angled front. It was flat on the bottom, so as not to catch wind, which he knew would be a significant issue from his experience in northern Canada.

He cut and pieced together multiple topographic maps into strips many feet long that he laminated and rolled like scrolls.

"I am someone good in mathematics. You must calculate the angle and the speed. I know quite precisely where I am all the time, if I refer to my maps," Morin said.



'Into the river alone'

On May 25, he began in Whitehorse, in Canada's Yukon Territory, downstream from the river's source but where most long Yukon treks start.

Around 6 a.m., he hugged a friend there to see him off. He eased into the water, emerald-colored there before it turns gray. He emailed his grown children.

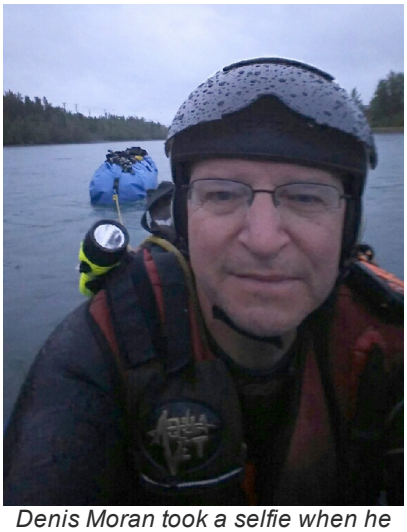
He didn't call any attention to what he was attempting. He didn't want to become a target for doubters, critics and haters.

"I just go into the river alone," he said.

He wore his fins and a helmet, a life vest and a wetsuit that fit snug at the start. By the end, he had dropped 40 pounds. The suit no longer fit tight, and it no longer kept him as warm, since more water could seep in.

His start was his hardest ever. Just north of Whitehorse, he came up on frigid Lake Laberge, more than 30 miles long and a main element in the Robert Service poem "The Cremation of Sam McGee" about a man with "awful dread of the icy grave."

Denis Moran took a selfie when he started the river trip in Whitehorse, Yukon, on May 25. (Denis Morin)



Denis Moran took a selfie when he started the river trip in Whitehorse, Yukon, on May 25. (Denis Morin)

On the lake, it stormed. Hail stung his body. A headwind made it hard to get glide. A canoeist pulled onto the shore, unable to go on.

Morin wasn't yet used to long days and cold water so it took a slow week to cross the lake. He didn't want injuries, to show up at the end as the guy who did it despite a broken leg. He wanted "a wonderful life experience."

He soon averaged 25 to 35 miles a day when the weather was right. He aimed for the Yukon's deeper main channel, the faster water for efficiency and speed.

"The current is my partner for dancing but I don't choose the rhythm and I don't choose the music," Morin said.

He hauled the gear in two waterproof bags. On calm spells, he inflated the bags and pulled them along on top. But when the weather worsened, he let the air out so they rode low and out of the wind.

He filmed himself with his GoPro, sometimes letting it float on driftwood alongside. He carried a SPOT personal tracker so friends could follow his virtual course. He could have used it to signal for help but never needed to. In towns with state troopers, he dropped by the post so if he disappeared, they would know where he had been.

He collected water from the river and creeks that he boiled and filtered. He never got sick.

The first stretch of river passed remnants of Gold Rush history, including old dredges and buildings.

'We will find your dead body on shore in some months'

Across the U.S. border in Eagle, Morin checked in with U.S. Customs through a designated phone. He stayed one night in a public use cabin near there, just one of two cabin nights on his whole trip.

In Alaska, the Yukon widens into a labyrinth of channels and "1,000 islands," Morin said.

"You cannot go there," an elder in Circle told him. Navigation was too treacherous. No one should try it without GPS, the elder said. "You go in there like that with your little fins, we will find your dead body on shore in some months," Morin remembers being told.

But with his papyrus of topographic maps, Morin felt confident he could stick to the main stem and not die trapped in a dead-end.

Denis Morin holds the map of the Yukon River he used on his swim from Whitehorse, Yukon, to Emmonak, Alaska in the Alaska Dispatch News studio on Wednesday, August 10, 2016 in Anchorage. (Bob Hallinen / Alaska Dispatch News)

"OK, watch me," he thought.

He had planned to take three or four days to reach the next village, Fort Yukon. With good weather, he sliced through that stretch of river in a day and a half.



Denis Morin holds the map of the Yukon River he used on his swim from Whitehorse, Yukon, to Emmonak, Alaska in the Alaska Dispatch News studio on Wednesday, August 10, 2016 in Anchorage. (Bob Hallinen / Alaska Dispatch News)

Onshore just outside the village, he made a little mistake. During a calm spell he set his $400 rain jacket over some gear and "in a minute a windstorm arrived and took my shell." The rain shell floated up like a feather, swirling about. Then it landed on the river. He grabbed his wetsuit to jump in for a jacket rescue. But it sunk and disappeared.

He bought a heavy fisherman's rain jacket in Fort Yukon and asked for word to get back to Circle that he had made it. He made another jacket out of a tarp, bungee cords and duct tape, so that he would have a dry one for camp.

Toward Galena, he swam for hours in the wind behind a barge headed the same way. He had a beer in the bar there, met the barge captain. It was the only bar he saw.

He bought Sidney Huntington's book "Shadows on the Koyukuk: An Alaskan Native's Life Along the River." It became his bible, his guide to the people.

Children in villages were curious but he was surprised most didn't know how to swim. They didn't get in the water with him and didn't want to try his board.

He saw many moose and a couple of brown bears. They weren't interested in him, and he doesn't fish or hunt. But salmon ran so thick in the Yukon they bumped his legs. One wedged itself between his body and his board.

"Finally I just dip my board a little bit and he go away," Morin said. "It was my only catch and I didn't eat it."

All along the way, village residents and boaters were surprised to see the Yukon swimmer.

"Some people were thinking I was a bear. Some others, thinking a moose," he said. And some thought he was someone in trouble.

Larson, in Russian Mission, was with his cousin working on the porch of the house he is building near the river.

"He stopped by and he told us where he swam from, where he was going, and how long it took. We couldn't believe it. We thought he was crazy," Larson said.

Denis Morin swims with his riverboard, towing his supplies. (Denis Morin)

But as Morin shared more of his story, Larson said, "we realized he didn't seem that crazy."

Larson provided Morin with some water and took him to his in-laws to charge his computer.

Back on the river, storms rolled in from the Bering Sea, creating 9- and 10-foot swells. Whitecaps crashed. He rode up waves, then over the other side, struggling with his bags of gear. In the worst of it, his GoPro was lost.

'Realizing all the trip I made'



Denis Morin swims with his riverboard, towing his supplies. (Denis Morin)

In Mountain Village during the first week of August, his last stop before the dayslong final push to Emmonak, Morin met with a group of men and felt a fast connection. Residents walked down to the beach to see him off. It was sunny. People hugged him.

In his book, Huntington had described how the community gathers to see someone important off. Morin flashed on that, overwhelmed. The kindness of people nourished him, he said.

"It was for me like 'you give so much. You give me so much — all the people on the river,' " Morin said.

For the last few days, he kicked along enveloped in gray. The sky and the river blended into each other.

And then he was in Emmonak.

"DONE," he posted on Facebook over a map of Alaska and the Yukon. People started congratulating him in English and French.

"Well done Denis-Alain!" wrote the riverboarding explorer, Remi Camus. "Quelle aventure!"



He shared a meal with a group from Emmonak on the shore of the Bering Sea. (Denis Morin)

He shared a meal with a group from Emmonak on the shore of the Bering Sea. (Denis Morin)

Morin was invited to a Bering Sea beach cookout with seal and king salmon, then rode along on a seal hunt. The hunters were successful.

He caught a boat ride with Kwikpak, the fish plant operator, to backtrack to St. Mary's and from there took a plane to Anchorage.

He stood on the bow and cried as they passed the same scenes he had experienced down low on the river's surface. The boat ride took a few hours, but on his board it had taken him a few days.

"When I was on the boat with quite big speed, I was realizing all the trip I made, and all the land and the wide, big dimension of the river."

He did something new for himself, and new for the river.



Denis Morin stands on the coast near Emmonak, at the Bering Sea. (Denis Morin)

Denis Morin stands on the coast near Emmonak, at the Bering Sea. (Denis Morin)

COMMENTS

Carson Driskill

3 days ago

White folks always creating new sports. Cool but useless and senseless, just another person going through midlife/retirement crisis and trying to make a sport/hobby/name/ for them selves and race. Anybody can create new ideas of how to accomplish feats or travel simply just using mother nature as a tool. Just as this, he's just another piece of debris floating down the river with man made influence. Instead of trying to make another sport "GUINNESS WORLD RECORD STYLE" where anybody can "create a feature or sport that never before existed prior to this feat, how about doing something practical and something beneficial towards evolution, rather than proving how nature works with todays technology such as your wet/drysuit and survival gear and floating a river with no practical cause, besides end of life crisis… Why'd I even bother reading this ridiculous story… AlaskanJ…

Syringa Lewis

3 days ago

Holy run-on sentence, Batman!

Pere Davison

3 days ago

In reply to:

White folks always creating new sports. Cool but useless and senseless, just another person going through midlife/retirement crisis and trying to make a sport/hobby/name/ for them selves and...

Carson Driskill

Some people like to challenge themselves. The Vikings left their homes in Denmark and Sweden and went all the way to Newfoundland to settle for a time,in primitive boats with no compass. Englishman and Spaniards came to the New World and built a new society. Americans landed on the Moon. Now we have robots exploring Mars, Jupiter, asteroids. This is the mentality that moved man from stone age culture to modernity.

PNW Tom

2 days ago

In reply to:

White folks always creating new sports. Cool but useless and senseless, just another person going through midlife/retirement crisis and trying to make a sport/hobby/name/ for them selves and...

— Carson Driskill

Ahh, this is one of those times when reading the article, not just skimming it, can yield some insight:

“He didn’t call any attention to what he was attempting. He didn’t want to become a target for doubters, critics and haters.

“I just go into the river alone,” he said.”

Looks like he’s a target regardless.

Rudy Wittshirk

2 days ago

In reply to:

White folks always creating new sports. Cool but useless and senseless, just another person going through midlife/retirement crisis and trying to make a sport/hobby/name/ for them selves and...

— Carson Driskill

Mr. Driskill: You sound like an angry, up-tight White guy…but at least you didn’t call Mr. Morin a liberal. One thing…the only direct contribution to “evolution”Mr. Morin can make is to pass on his genes.

YA RIGHT

2 days ago

In reply to:

White folks always creating new sports. Cool but useless and senseless, just another person going through midlife/retirement crisis and trying to make a sport/hobby/name/ for them selves and...

— Carson Driskill

White folks. Can you be more specific. You mean French or German or Spanish or what do you mean? Yes, the people in Spain are white. I know huh? Quit being a racist and try to enjoy life. Remember the feelings that thrive in a person are the ones you feed.

Jim Bowron jb49

2 days ago

In reply to:

White folks always creating new sports. Cool but useless and senseless, just another person going through midlife/retirement crisis and trying to make a sport/hobby/name/ for them selves and...

— Carson Driskill

flipper the dolphin would be proud of you ! he passed on back in 1999 i think ! good work my fellow human being ! may the current be with you wwwwhaw

Jim Bowron jb49

2 days ago

In reply to:

Mr. Driskill: You sound like an angry, up-tight White guy...but at least you didn't call Mr. Morin a liberal. One thing...the only direct contribution to "evolution"Mr. Morin can make is to pass on...

— Rudy Wittshirk

here's a poem for you titled Dog Food , if you deny God your dog is your god ,or your dog is your God wwwwhaw jb49

bycatch

2 days ago

In reply to:

White folks always creating new sports. Cool but useless and senseless, just another person going through midlife/retirement crisis and trying to make a sport/hobby/name/ for them selves and...

— Carson Driskill

Driskill, that is one stupid post. Sounds to me like you're the one with a crisis.

hodad

2 days ago

In reply to:

Ahh, this is one of those times when reading the article, not just skimming it, can yield some insight: "He didn't call any attention to what he was attempting. He didn't want to become a target...

PNW Tom

Big Deal on this, Charlie Wolf (99 days on the Yukon) read the book used to do this every summer for years in a small canoe. He was in his 70's.

Deb Buzdor

1 day ago

In reply to:

Holy run-on sentence, Batman!

— Syringa Lewis

And the first comment I read has to be negative! This guy is awesome!!! Man you must have a real unhappy life. How did this guy interfere with you? Obvious you are no sort of outdoors person or a real Alaskan. Most of us live here because we love the out of doors and appreciate nature and one of the most beautiful wilderness countries in the world. Go find something to do instead of writing mean comments about folks who take the time to see the real Alaska. And they use their own brain and body to put themselves to a test. I thought this story was one that showed how well prepared one must be to head out into the wilderness. He planned meticulously and had everything he needed and was successful. Cheers to Denis!

Carson Driskill

3 days ago

Let me set a new record for crawling my native ass across the concrete jungle through 10 miles of waste deep snow to get to school “ON TIME’ mind you, and see if I create any new “records” or start any new crisis’ world wide. Doubt it…SMH… its just another back page story…UNLESS

Dave63

3 days ago

Wow, I sence hostility and racism towards the “white man” in your last two posts. Why are you using the (“white man’s) tools ??? Can’t you just admire a persons accomplishment?? I have an idea since your disgusted by his using a man made object. Use natural items found in the Forrest to create your own non “white man made” products of any sort and do what he did. That would impress me. And no camera or video allowed, as that’s not natural.

Jean Ferlen Moran

2 days ago

In reply to:

Let me set a new record for crawling my native ass across the concrete jungle through 10 miles of waste deep snow to get to school "ON TIME' mind you, and see if I create any new "records" or start...

— Carson Driskill

What makes you so angry Carson?

YA RIGHT

2 days ago

In reply to:

Let me set a new record for crawling my native ass across the concrete jungle through 10 miles of waste deep snow to get to school "ON TIME' mind you, and see if I create any new "records" or start...

— Carson Driskill

Or you could use a snow machine like most people or a dog sled then use them in a sport. Just what did this guy do that was so bad? He didn't write the article he just wanted to float down a river. Would it have been better to use a power boat?

wrangell86

2 days ago

Being close to Nature is life changing. Laying/floating/swimming in water changed this man. It would change anyone. Thanks for telling the story.

Syringa Lewis

3 days ago

Man, that is so awesome, and congratulations!! I took swiftwater rescue a few years back and always wondered if it were possible to use those boogie boards for a nav trek like this one. Thanks for being bold!

RJD

3 days ago

Amazing and transformative. Thanks for the adventure Mr. Morin and the telling of the story Ms. Demer. But it looks the like the haters and the doubters and the critics will find you with their bad grammar, poor spelling, and displaced anger every time. The internet is great for telling stories like this, but it's also a portal for others to direct their anger and frustration at any moving target they see.

WilLinda Forsberg

3 days ago

Great story about an amazing adventure! The guy couldn't afford a "dry" suit? Wearing a wet suit must have gotten pretty clammy and cold… no wonder he lost 40 pounds!

Jean Ferlen Moran

2 days ago

Wetsuits keep you comfortable when you are actively moving, like his swimming. :-)

Brian Dickerson

3 days ago

The definition of incredible. Great job.

Julie Christensen

3 days ago

Great Job Denis! Thanks for sharing your incredible journey.

Jennifer Ives O'Meara

3 days ago

Simply amazing. Just imagine the view of four months on a riverboard.

Bryan Murray

3 days ago

IT takes all kinds and he is one of a kind. Congrats with respect. Now go see a doctor.

Dan Presley

3 days ago

Good to test yourself sometimes. Congratulations!

Chiaroscuro

3 days ago

That's a GREAT tale. Congratulations.

Christopher Stuart

2 days ago

Great story!!!

Rose Wallner

3 days ago

Wow….kick on…hope u found what u were looking for….

Josh Klauder

2 days ago

Ummmm…..Rivers don't have dead ends. Just sayin'.

Robert Traut

2 days ago

The Yukon has channels that go to dead ends.

Syringa Lewis

2 days ago

In reply to:

Ummmm.....Rivers don't have dead ends. Just sayin'.

— Josh Klauder

If you're on a braided one you do; depending on the water level and side channels.

Thom Swan

2 days ago

In reply to:

Ummmm.....Rivers don't have dead ends. Just sayin'.

— Josh Klauder

Sloughs and side channels do, and Yukon Flats is full of sloughs and side channels. You can trust local knowledge far more than a long obsolete USGS sectional.

bycatch

2 days ago

"It was for me like 'you give so much. You give me so much — all the people on the river."

Great quote from a grateful man.

Andrée McLeod

2 days ago

Oh là là…Magnifique!

Bravo!

JetRx

2 days ago

Great adventure. Interesting take on river travel.

Liked by:

Move along

2 days ago

Awesome adventure Mr. Morin! I salute you for your sense of adventure. It pleases me greatly to see someone reach a life changing goal.

I'm also glad that you were well prepared and experienced. There have been other "adventurers" this year that barely escaped with their lives.

Wolf Eagle

3 days ago

Human constant search for fulfillment by returning to the natural world after a lifetime of artificial existence.

in a small town

1 day ago

While initially I held off firmly on reading past the title of this piece.

And while not a fan of 'reality TV' or most invented 'Alaska' or outdoor shows that is partially my standoff indifference; yet because I've been alone with next to nothing from the material manufactured world for a time, in wilderness, I can appreciate the journey & effort this individual has made to challenge himself.

It is not about him. It is about learning, it is about appreciation of how big life is when someone chooses to embrace an adventure. A well-thought out adventure. And the challenge was taken on with skill, knowledge and more of a plan than you see some drivers on paved roads seem to have changing lanes every too often in short distance.

The difference between a real adventure, the mindset to accomplish this, is way different than most northern stories. Apparently he was up to the task, makes friends easily; & those who are caught up in a limited urban circle of life need to get out more. ;)

Pere Davison

3 days ago

A little wacky,yes! But ,if that's what he wanted to do to challenge himself,good for him. What a challenge! I did a short section of Yukon in a sea kayak, Whitehorse to Carmacks. Better choice of vessel in my mind!

Ron Dionne

2 days ago

I'm a distance ocean swimmer. Been in rivers in Alaska. Grew up there. One question … did he ever fall asleep/nap during an easy drift?

Kevin Brew

13 hours ago

wow

drpohl

2 days ago

The Northwest Passage didn’t exist until Europeans created the idea of a route through the Arctic to the Orient. Is you build it, it you do it made someone else would like to also - go for it - to each their own. Ditch the old Spot and switch to a Delorme InReach with two-way texting for $65/month unlimited messages and 6 minute GPS tracking… 9-1-1 rescue too. Kudos on your accomplisment.

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Can't Hurry Love: Rare Snail Finds Romance After Global Search

2016-11-10 npr.org

NPR logo

November 10, 20164:26 PM ET



Angus Davison hide caption toggle caption Angus Davison Rare snail Jeremy (left) meets a potential mate named Lefty. Angus Davison

Rare snail Jeremy (left) meets a potential mate named Lefty.

A genetic fluke stood in the way of love for a lonely, unique garden snail named Jeremy.

But against all odds, and thanks to a global search, Jeremy has hopefully found a mate (or two).

Jeremy is a "lefty" snail, meaning his shell swirls counterclockwise and his sex organs are on the left side of his head. He's a mirror image of other members of his species — and he wouldn't be able to mate with normal snails because their reproductive organs wouldn't line up.

He could be one in a million, evolutionary geneticist Angus Davison of the University of Nottingham tells The Two-Way, though scientists are now thinking it's a trait likely found in one out of every 100,000 snails.

Davison's team is working to determine the gene that makes Jeremy's shell swirl to the left — and studying his offspring would be helpful for their research. Incidentally, Jeremy is named after Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the U.K.'s Labour Party who also has a fondness for gardens.

They put out a call asking the public "for its help in finding the lonely mollusc a mate," and spread the word using the hashtag #snaillove. As Popular Science charmingly says, "even snails use online dating."

Article continues after sponsorship

Almost immediately, Jeremy, who was originally discovered in a London compost heap, became a media sensation in the U.K. and beyond — a "shellebrity," as Davison puts it.

"We didn't really know how big a hope it would be, or the chances of success, to find one," he says. "But it worked — we found two."



The two snails have been observed "flirting," scientists say.

Angus Davison

The owners of the two possible mates have very different stories. "Both of them are snail enthusiasts. Both think people should know more about snails. But apart from that, nothing in common," Davison adds.

Contestant No. 1: A snail named "Lefty," a pet to a snail enthusiast near Ipswich, U.K. She got in touch as soon as she heard about the appeal, Davison says.

Contestant No. 2: A snail in Majorca, Spain, found by a snail farmer who runs a restaurant that specializes in — you guessed it — snails. The farmer heard about the appeal and then, Davison says, "amazingly a couple of days later, he came across one that coils the other way, in preparing snails prior to them being cooked."

Jeremy has already met Lefty — "you can call it a honeymoon, if you like," Davison says. The two have been observed "flirting, which means "gentle biting," but he says he's "fairly confident that they haven't mated yet."

The way snails mate is "fantastically bizarre," Davison says. The carnal act is known as "traumatic insemination," and copulation kicks off by mutually stabbing each other with "love darts" — tiny calcium spears that transfer a hormone. Snails are simultaneous hermaphrodites, he says, meaning that they are both male and female at the same time and will "reciprocally fertilize each other" and ultimately each produce offspring.

In a further twist, snails can reproduce on their own because they are hermaphrodites. But Davison says this happens "very rarely but they'd much prefer to mate with another snail." Inbreeding, he notes, is "generally not a good strategy."

The idea is for Jeremy to spend time with Lefty until they have mated — and that'll be clear because the so-called love darts are fairly large structures that will be visible in the tank.

Their offspring will provide an answer to one big question: Will breeding the two snails result in more lefty shells or will their offspring sport clockwise coils?

Even if Jeremy and Lefty find love, Davison says his team is also exploring ways to introduce Jeremy to the snail from Majorca.

Earlier this year, his team published research in Current Biology that suggested the gene that causes a snail's shell to twist counter-clockwise could also "offer clues to how the same gene affects body asymmetry in other animals including humans."

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Car runs over ghost-like figure – and then something truly terrifying happens

express.co.uk

express_logo

Car runs over ghost-like figure – and then something truly terrifying happens

A TERRIFYING encounter with a haunting hooded figure in the middle of highway in the dark of night has gone viral.

By Oli Smith
PUBLISHED: 15:10, Fri, Aug 19, 2016 | UPDATED: 15:17, Fri, Aug 19, 2016

An actor-comedian posted the creepy video of his car screeching to a sudden stop when a mysterious figure emerged ahead of it.

The Tamil star Parotta Soori shared the paranormal sighting from India on Facebook on Thursday night – and it has already reached more than a quarter of a million views.

In the video, the actor and his driver are talking in casual conversation when they suddenly approach an eerie figure standing still in the middle of the road on a highway.



FACEBOOK

The video was titled 'My Real Ghost Encounter, Unbelievably True. Coimbatore to Palani Road at 2.30am'.

The panicked passenger immediately tells the driver to speed up and go around the ghost-like figure – but the man behind the wheel refuses.

As Mr Soori zooms in his camera on the figure it can be seen to wearing what looks like an orange sari with ankles showing underneath.

The spooked-out actor instantly demands the driver turn off the car lights.

As they sit in the darkness, the panic suddenly builds amid heavy breathing and frantic shouting.

He also asks the driver to speed towards the figure and run it over.

When the lights go off a sudden and terrifying thud can be heard.

At the end of minute-long clip, the driver turns on the lights inside the car to reveal the windshield covered in a strange dress which then disappears a moment later.

Although plenty of viewers believe the terrifying ghost footage, others have pointed out that Mr Soori, who works as a comedian and has acted in more than 65 films, could just be joking with his fans.



FACEBOOK



FACEBOOK

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Eerie photographs of abandoned mental hospital falling into disrepair

dailymail.co.uk

- **Shaun Ashford, from Cardiff, in Wales, took these chilling images of an abandoned mental health hospital**
- **Whitchurch psychiatric hospital once catered for around 750 patients including those with schizophrenia**
- **The site is currently earmarked for residential development with outline planning permission for flats**

By Jessica Duncan For Mailonline

An urban explorer has captured chilling images of an abandoned mental health hospital falling into disrepair.

Photographer Shaun Ashford, 26, collected more than a hundred photographs of the spooky wards, halls, morgue, and examination rooms at the Whitchurch psychiatric hospital near Cardiff in Wales.

When the hospital first opened it catered for around 750 patients, where women who had children out of wedlock were housed and some schizophrenics were locked up indefinitely.



Photographer Shaun Ashford, 26, from Cardiff, Wales, collected this spooky pictures of Whitchurch psychiatric hospital



The chilling images show equipment untouched and paint is peeling off walls from the damp

Staff at the hospital looked after women who had children out of wedlock and some schizophrenics were locked up there indefinitely

From rooms with padded walls, long straight corridors and unused psychiatric equipment, this haunting building has been left almost untouched for the last 30 years.

Damp is causing the paint to peel, the floors to rot and greenery can be seen growing through cracks in the windows after decades of lying dormant.

The NHS-run institution shut its doors to patients in April after 108 years of service, having opened in 1908 following a ten-year build which cost £350,000 (£37.5m in today's money).

The haunting building has been left untouched for at least 30 years





Writing n the walls of the 'staff on Whitchurch shutdown'

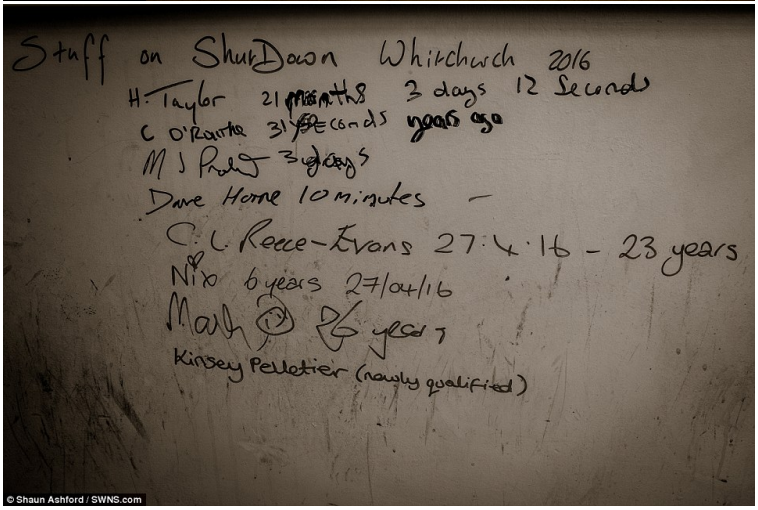
Long dark corridors with noticeboards untouched were pictured by Mr Ashford for hours

He said 'this place is amazing, it has been on my hit list for a while so when I learned it was going to close down I knew I had to get in to see it'



'This place is amazing, it has been on my hit list for a while so when I learned it was going to close down I knew I had to get in to see it', Mr Ashford said.

Mr Ashford, who is from Cardiff, began exploring the vast site with his girlfriend, Gemma Cowell, 25, in the evenings in September.



He added: 'I get a rush from knowing I'm getting photos of things I shouldn't be able to see, I get the adrenaline rush from that.'

Chairs left tucked in and thank you cards still pinned to the wall, Mr Ashford said he got a rush from taking the photos

Mr Ashford started being an urban explorer around nine years ago but Whitchurch was on his hit list

A picture of 'bedroom 14' covered with a sheet in the hospital which was renovated before it was finally closed

The NHS-run institution shut its doors to patients in April after 108 years of service

Mr Ashford took more than 100 pictures of the hospital which is manned by security

His urban exploring passion began nine years ago when he stumbled upon a burnt out house in Barry and he started taking pictures of what he found.

Mr Ashford, who runs a private ambulance service during the day, skates on a thin line concerning the law of trespassing but adds 'It's part of the thrill'.



Mr Ashford, who runs a private ambulance service during the day, skates on a thin line concerning the law of trespassing but adds 'It's part of the thrill'

One of the rooms with a 'personal space' diagram on the wall

The site is currently earmarked for residential development with outline planning permission in place for 150 homes and 180 flats



He commented: 'The best thing about this project from my point of view has been discovering the patient memories, messages scrawled inside wardrobes including poems and messages one patient would write for the next telling them to stick it out.'

The site is currently earmarked for residential development with outline planning permission in place for 150 homes and 180 flats.

What looks like it used to be a games room or staff room with pool table, piano, sofas and chairs





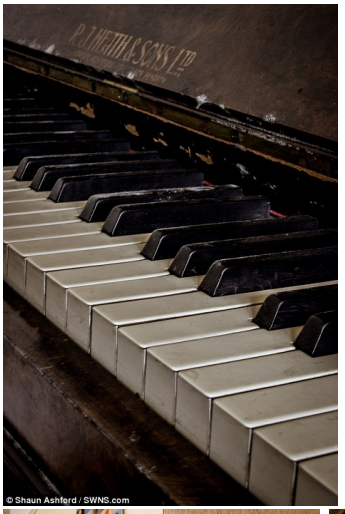
Books stacked relating to surgery, medical practice and health care and thank you notes from patients and families

Puzzles that hadn't been finished still left on a table

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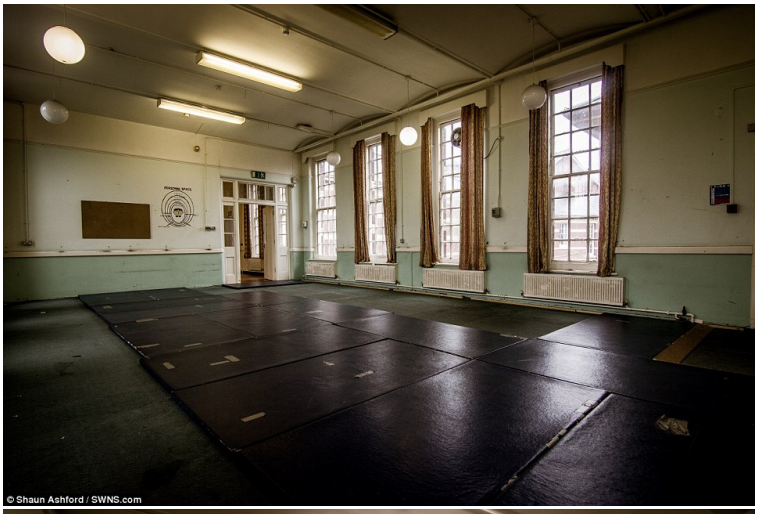

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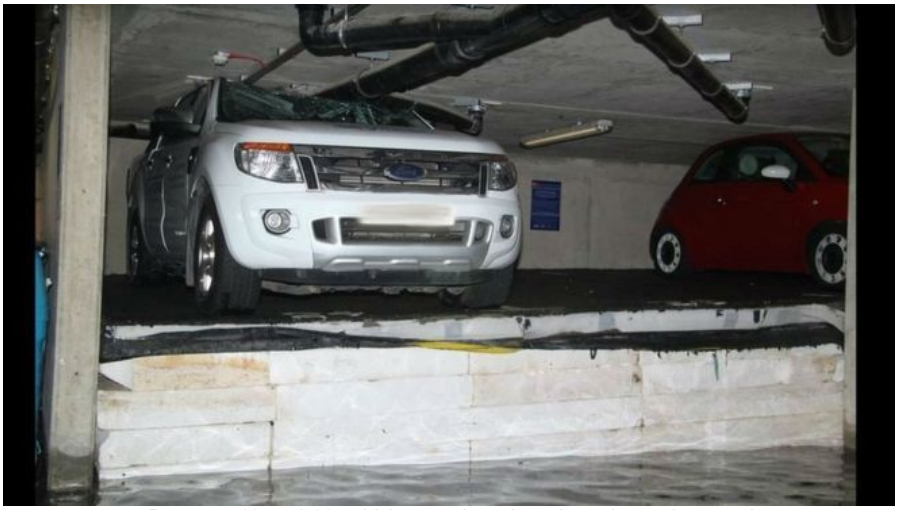


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Cars crushed at Crayford flats after water pipe bursts - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC



Between 12 and 16 vehicles are thought to have been damaged

Image copyrightPaul Wood

Cars were crushed after a burst water pipe flooded an underground car park.

A number of vehicles crumpled after polystyrene insulation under the floor appeared to float or swell, forcing them into the concrete ceiling above.

Flood water rose several feet at the newly-built car park below a block of flats in Crayford, south-east London.

Residents said they had been warned if any of the cars were removed too hastily it could result in gas explosion.

Between 12 and 16 vehicles are thought to have been damaged.

One owner was told her car was written off as a result of the damage and might not be covered by insurance.

Sadia Farzana Chitra, 42, said: "My car is crushed, the roof is gone.

"We were told we cannot move it because there is a possibility with the pressure of the car there could be a blast because of the gas inside.

"It can blow up the whole building."

Image copyright Sadia Farzana Chitra
Image caption One owner was told her car has been written off by the damage

Several homes were left without water and Thames Water said its team was working to fix a 24-inch pipe.

A spokesman for Gallions Housing Association, which manages the car park, told the Evening Standard: "All Gallions residents are safe, have clean water and there has been no water ingress into anyone's home.

"Water has damaged some cars in the car park in the basement, and Thames Water have advised that they will have officers based at the library tomorrow [Monday] to get all of the details from those affected."

The flooding caused severe travel disruption after filling the road near Townhall Square.

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Image copyright Sadia Farzana Chitra

Cat blamed for syringe in Halloween candy bag

2016/11/07 cbc.ca



cbc masthead logo

CBC News Posted: Nov 07, 2016 10:09 AM CT Last Updated: Nov 07, 2016 10:09 AM CT

The investigation into a syringe found in a girl's Halloween candy bag has led back to a clumsy pet cat.

Brandon police say the cat knocked over a box of insulin syringes, sending them spilling out with one falling into a bowl of treats the family had set aside for trick-or-treaters.

The syringe was then unintentionally scooped up and put into the treat bag of a teenage girl.

Police sent out a news release last week, saying they were investigating after two girls, age 13 and 15, found the unused device in one of their bags after getting home on Halloween night.

The incident was not malicious, police said.

The cat isn't speaking.

CBC

Radio-Canada

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Sir John Soane's catacombs are open to the public for the first time

11:05 EST, 16 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com
MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Catacombs inside Sir John Soane's historic London home are open to the public for the first time in almost 180 years after £7million restoration

- **Sir John Soane's Museum unveiled the catacombs as part of its new spaces**
- **The London museum has just completed a seven year restoration project**
- **On display are 365 objects that haven't been shown since Soane's death**

By Qin Xie For Mailonline

Sir John Soane might be best known for designing the Bank of England building and Dulwich Picture Gallery but it's arguably his own home that holds the architect's best works.

The property in central London, now the Sir John Soane's Museum, was built by the architect to house his collectibles.

Now, for the first time in almost 180 years since Soane's death, visitors are able to see the items, including the collection of Roman funeral urns in the catacombs, as the museum unveils its 'lost spaces'.



There are 365 objects on display at Sir John Soane's Museum that haven't been on public display since the architect's death in 1837



New to the museum are the subterranean catacombs, which feature Soane's collection of rare Roman cinerary urns (right), and the Apollo Recess (left)

There are 365 objects on display at Sir John Soane's Museum that haven't been on public display since the architect's death in 1837.



The items were unveiled last month after the completion of a seven year, £7million restoration project that saw many items returned to the positions dictated by Soane.

New to the museum are the subterranean catacombs, which feature Soane's collection of rare Roman cinerary urns.

There are also several new spaces, including the lobby to the breakfast room, the basement anteroom, and the house's kitchens, featuring 'what is believed to be the oldest surviving patented kitchen range in the world'.

Soane had started building the museum while he was still alive.

Left, newly restored lobby to the breakfast room and right, recreated consoles and bust in the lobby to the breakfast room





Soane opened up his home to his students and later managed to negotiate an act of parliament before his death to preserve his house and collections. Above, the basement ante room

Soane had started building the museum (right) while he was still alive. He bought, demolished and rebuilt three houses in Inn Fields to house his ever expanding collection. Left, statues in the West Corridor

He bought, demolished and rebuilt three houses in Inn Fields to house his ever expanding collection, which included items of architectural importance.





Soane opened up the space to his students and later managed to negotiate an act of parliament before his death to preserve his house and collections.

John Bridges, curatorial assistant at Sir John Soane's Museum, told Hyperallergic: 'The reason for restoring the catacombs and the lobby to the breakfast room is to comply with Soane's wishes — enshrined by Private Act of Parliament — that the museum should remain unchanged from the time of his death.



'Unfortunately these spaces were largely dismantled in the latter part of the 19th century, but the inventories, description, and drawings give all the information needed to return these spaces back to their appearance in 1837.'

Now, following the restoration, the museum can continue to be open to the public for free for 'inspiration and education' - just as Soane wanted it.

SIR JOHN SOANE AND HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER



Above, a portrait of Sir John Soane

Soane was the son of a bricklayer who he rose to the top of his profession, becoming professor of architecture at the Royal Academy and an official architect to the Office of Works. He received a knighthood in 1831.

His architectural works were distinguished by their simplicity and use of light.

His best-known work was the Bank of England, a building at the centre on commercial architecture. He also designed Dulwich Picture Gallery.

His main legacy is Sir John Soane's Museum, in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London. The museum comprises his former home and office. It has been a public museum since the early 19th century.

Soane demolished and rebuilt three houses in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He started with No. 12, which he worked on between 1792 and 1794, afterwards moving onto No. 13, which was re-built in two phases between 1808 and 1812 and concluded with No. 14, rebuilt in 1823 and 1824.

In 1800, the architect John Soane, who was enjoying an illustrious career as an architect and surveyor to the Bank Of England, purchased Pitzhanger Manor House.

He set about building his own home, which he saw as 'a sort of portrait' of himself. Following its completion in 1804, the Soanes used the building as a weekend retreat and a place of entertainment.





Comments (

virginiaplain, Melonville, Canada, 14 hours ago

One of my favourite museums, and I've been to a lot of them. When someone I know is going to London, I tell them about it, and they always love it.

ElsieW, England UK, United Kingdom, 1 day ago

It's a brilliant museum to visit and used to be a real 'hidden gem'.

Bert, Millwall, 1 day ago

A fantastic museum, one of London's gems and redolent of the period of the Georgian Grand Tour. Even better, entry is free of charge!!

Harriet, Toronto, Canada, 1 day ago

This is one of my favourite museums in London, it's size and artifacts are just perfect for a lazy afternoon of sightseeing. These new additions are going to be most impressive. Soane's Museum has to be one of the most underrated and lovely museums in all of London.

Cheryl, Maritimes, Canada, 1 day ago

Wow! Beautiful! So glad this has been done and the public can enjoy it.

Between2worlds, world, United States, 1 day ago

Would be interesting to see..

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Man filming flight of catapulted flaming pumpkin nearly struck by fire

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Oct. 19, 2016 at 4:41 PM



A flaming pumpkin soars through the air after being launched by a catapult. Screenshot: Newsflare

PERU TOWNSHIP, Ohio, Oct. 19 (UPI) -- A man filming the flight of a flaming pumpkin launched from a giant catapult captured the moment he narrowly evaded being set aflame.

A video filmed Saturday in Ohio shows the man's perspective as he stands a distance away from the catapult and films the flight of its payload, a pumpkin that had been set on fire.

The flaming pumpkin lands near the man and spits flames that nearly ignite the man's clothes.

The filmer said the catapult was built by an engineer friend who uses it for annual events.

"He has had it for a few years, and every October he has a clam bake/low country boil and flaming pumpkin launch party. It's always a great time!" the man wrote online.

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Woman says catfish fell from sky, striking her near Art Museum

William Bender
20160911

philly.com

The Inquirer DAILY NEWS

Updated: September 10, 2016 — 1:08 AM EDT

Sometimes you eat the catfish, and sometimes the catfish falls from the sky and smacks you in the face.



Lisa Lobree learned that lesson Labor Day morning when she was walking to meet her CoreFitness class near the Art Museum, heard a "rustling" in the trees, and then -.

"Suddenly I was slammed by something," Lobree recalled Friday. "I was like, 'What?!' I was freaking out."

The injuries: Minor. The trauma: Immeasurable. The theory: A bird was flying with the fish in its mouth and accidentally dropped it. On her face.

Lobree immediately buckled to the ground, screaming - the only logical reaction when one is assaulted by a flying fish with whiskers. Her friend started screaming something about a fish. People were asking if she was OK. There may have been some crying involved.

"It definitely hurt me and I didn't know what happened," Lobree said.

At first, she thought there were fish guts on her face, but it turned out to be a cut near her eye. Later, her face started swelling.

Witnesses reported seeing a bird flying away - a vulture or hawk or eagle, maybe. The catfish was about 16 inches long, perhaps five pounds.

Gina Mancuso, co-owner of CoreFitness, said she had just started instructing the 9 a.m. boot camp class when one of Lobree's friends came running over.

"I said, 'What's happening?' She said, 'Lisa's been hit by a fish,' " Mancuso recalled. "I handed her my phone. Then I made a couple jokes to the rest of the class."

Based on the height of the trees above, Lobree said, the fish probably fell at least 50 feet, striking branches along the way.

"It's a crazy, crazy thing," she said.

Lobree walked to her Fairmount home and took a long shower. Estimated time: 30 minutes.

"I smelled really bad. I was so disgusted," she said. "I was a little bit shocked, actually."

That afternoon, Lobree developed a 101-degree fever, which she said is rare for her. It might have been a coincidence, but she was worried about a possible infection. A pediatrician neighbor said that was unlikely.

Lobree called her doctor as a precaution and got the answering service. They thought it was a prank call - a fish story, you might say.

"I told them a fish fell out of the sky," Lobree said. "She asked if it was from an airplane."

Later, her doctor called and prescribed antibiotics, but the fever went away on its own. It might have just been from the trauma, the doctor suggested.

Lobree still had a cut under her eye Friday.

"People are still asking me about the cut on my face," she said. "They say, 'What happened to you?' And it's like, 'Here we go again.' "

Lobree, who said she is not particularly prone to this kind of bad luck, is thankful that she only sustained minor injuries.

"It could have been so much worse," she said. "What if it hit a child? It was a not a fun experience, but there are so many worse things that could've happened. It's probably one of the strangest things that have happened to me in my life."

Growing up in Colorado, Lobree said, she used to go fishing, and she still "loves to fish." With a rod and a reel. Not her face.

Before Monday, she had never caught a catfish.

"It was the first catfish that my face caught," she said.

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215-854-5255 @wbender99

Published: September 9, 2016 — 6:07 PM EDT | **Updated:** September 10, 2016 — 1:08 AM EDT
The Philadelphia Inquirer

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Cemetery beekeeping, honey operation buzzes among graves

Kathy Willens, Associated Press
Updated 8:37 am, Saturday, November 12, 2016

seattlepi.com

http://www.seattlepi.com/news/us/article/Cemetery-beekeeping-honey-operation-buzzes-among-10610186.php



















NEW YORK (AP) — The silent graves and mausoleums of Brooklyn's Green-Wood cemetery are the final resting place of luminaries who created a buzz when they were alive, like composer Leonard Bernstein, newspaperman Horace Greeley and maverick artist Jean-Michel Basquiat.



It's also home to some 600,000 honeybees and a beekeeping operation that churns out honey sold under the brand name "The Sweet Hereafter."

Brooklyn beekeeper Davin Larson, 30, who worked with bees as a youngster growing up in the Midwest, got the idea for the hives while listening to a classical music concert at Green-Wood's central chapel two years ago.

"I was sitting there when I thought, "This has to be a perfect place to keep bees in the city,'" he said.

Founded in 1839, Green-Wood sprawls over 478 acres of rolling hills, winding roads and pretty paths and ponds, making it one of the larger green areas in the city.

Larson proposed the idea to cemetery volunteer Nicole Francis, herself a backyard beekeeper. She sold the concept to the cemetery's public programming director.

Today, the bees help pollinate the cemetery's tons of flowering plants and trees, said John Connolly, Green-Wood's General Manager Public Engagement and Involvement.

To help defray the high cost of maintaining the hives, supporters of the program are encouraged to shell out $500 to sponsor a hive, or $250 for half a hive.

Green-Wood's beekeepers harvested 200 pounds of honey this year, sold from a wheeled cart outside the cemetery's gothic main gate.

Larson manages six of Green-Wood's 15 hives.

In the spring, the bees feed on sugar water, which encourages them to build honeycombs. Then, depending on the weather, they produce honey from April through June, Larson said. In the fall, the bees are fed a formula twice as sweet to ensure they have enough food through the winter.

"We probably bought 400 pounds of sugar this year," Larson said.

Green-Wood contains the remains of 560,000 people, including decorative arts designer Louis Comfort Tiffany, Brooklyn Dodgers owner Charles Ebbetts, box-score inventor Henry Chadwick and "Wizard of Oz" actor Frank Morgan (who played the Wizard and other characters).

"I was concerned people whose have relatives buried in Green-Wood would object, but they've been nothing but supportive," Larson said.

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Carnage of the Charge of the Light Brigade laid bare in rare account dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com
MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

'We could scarcely get along for dead bodies. I never saw such carnage': The bloody chaos of the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade is laid bare in a rare account penned by a soldier who survived the 'Valley of Death'

- **Soldier who survived the suicidal Charge of the Light Brigade penned first-person account of the carnage**
- **He describes how dozens of his comrades fell on the battlefield around him during the 1854 offensive**
- **A rare surviving copy of Sergeant William Butler's military pamphlet is going under the hammer next month**

By Stephanie Linning for MailOnline

Published: 06:45 EST, 5 October 2016 | Updated: 09:32 EST, 5 October 2016

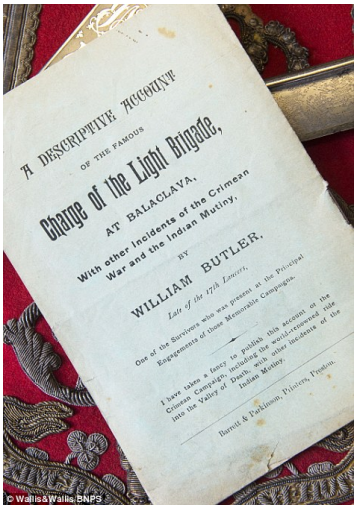
They are remembered as the 'noble six hundred' who rode 'into the mouth of Hell' with unwavering valour in Lord Tennyson's poem commemorating the Charge of the Light Brigade.

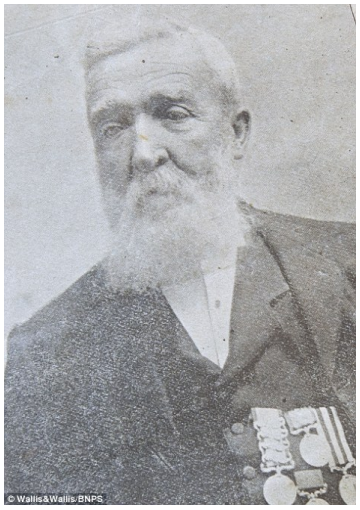
Now a remarkable account from one of the soldiers who survived the carnage has emerged, providing a graphic insight into one of the most glorious failures in British military history.

Sergeant William Butler, who was 29 at the time of the Crimean War charge, described how he fought on as comrades were mercilessly cut down by Russians all around him.

Some 673 cavalrymen headed into what became known as the ‘Valley of Death’ in October 1854. There were 245 casualties, including 118 dead.

Sgt Butler self-published his account of his military service in a small pamphlet in retirement. A rare surviving copy is now being auctioned by a private collector.





Survivor: Sergeant William Butler, right, who was 29 at the time of the Crimean War charge, shared his experiences in 'A Descriptive Account of the Famous Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava', left, which is being auctioned next week

Carnage: This painting illustrates the scene of the suicidal charge on the battlefields of Crimea. Some 673 cavalrymen headed into what became known as the ‘Valley of Death’ in October 1854. There were 245 casualties, including 118 dead

The account, titled 'A Descriptive Account of the Famous Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava', begins with the march from London to Portsmouth in March 1854.



The 17th Lancers, which formed part of the Light Brigade of the British cavalry, was then deployed overseas.

On the voyage to Constantinople in Turkey, 15 horses were lost overboard, included Sgt Butler's. He was so affected by its death that he contemplated jumping in the sea, he wrote.

In September 1854 a 'skirmishing' party of 400 men was sent out at Alma in the Crimea. They encountered 11,000 Russian cavalrymen but were able to disperse the enemy.

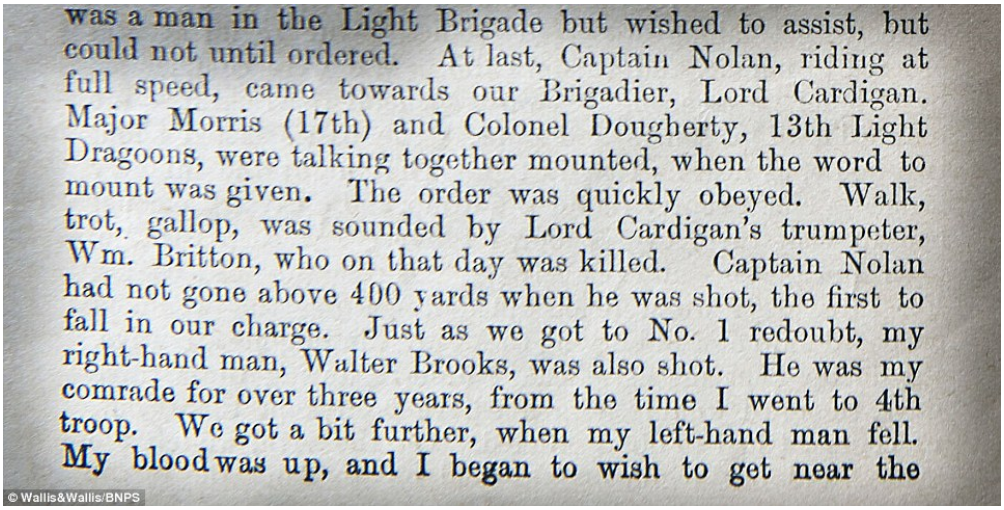
- That's quite the cover charge! Original artwork used on the... Newly discovered Nuremberg war trial documents reveal one of... 'Moriarty of the Old Master' pulls off the art crime of the...

Sgt Butler wrote: 'The Russians made several attacks but their pluck was not good enough. Had they been more courageous we should not have been more than a mouthful for them.'

The British then rode over the ground they had left.

Cpl Butler wrote: 'We could scarcely get along for dead bodies. I never saw such carnage.'

The Russians clashed with the Brits at Balaclava on October 25, attacking the brigade on the right flank of the Light Brigade. It was then Sgt Butler and his comrades were sent into action.


was a man in the Light Brigade but wished to assist, but could not until ordered. At last, Captain Nolan, riding at full speed, came towards our Brigadier, Lord Cardigan. Major Morris (17th) and Colonel Dougherty, 13th Light Dragoons, were talking together mounted, when the word to mount was given. The order was quickly obeyed. Walk, trot, gallop, was sounded by Lord Cardigan's trumpeter, Wm. Britton, who on that day was killed. Captain Nolan had not gone above 400 yards when he was shot, the first to fall in our charge. Just as we got to No. 1 redoubt, my right-hand man, Walter Brooks, was also shot. He was my comrade for over three years, from the time I went to 4th troop. We got a bit further, when my left-hand man fell. My blood was up, and I began to wish to get near the

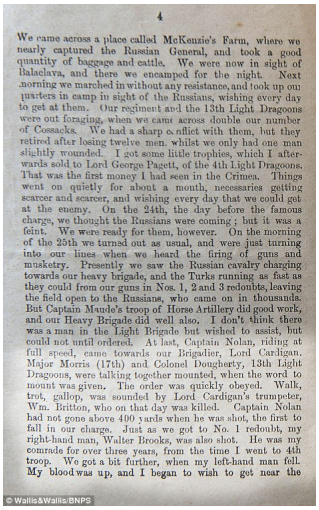
Charging into action: This extract from the eyewitness account describes the moment Private William Britton, Lord Cardigan's duty trumpeter, blew on his bugle several times to signal the men to walk, trot and gallop towards the enemy

Marching towards the carnage: The account begins with the regiment's journey to Balaclava, where the battle took place (left). He then goes on to describe how comrades were shot dead around him just moments into the battle (right)

'INTO THE MOUTH OF HELL': HISTORY OF THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

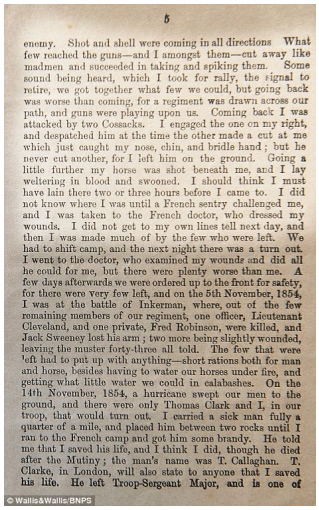
Lord Tennyson, who commemorated the battle with the poem the Charge of the Light Brigade

The Charge of the Light Brigade took place in October 1854 during the Crimean War.


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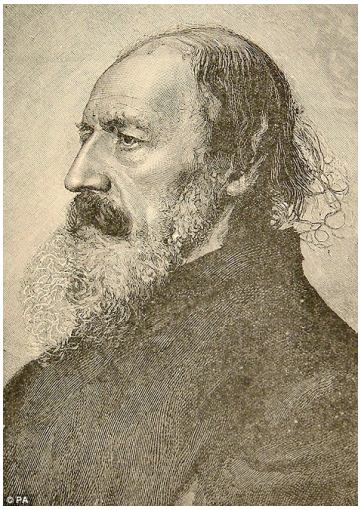
We came across a place called McKenzie's Farm, where we nearly captured the Russian General, and took a good quantity of baggage and cattle. We were now in sight of Balaclava, and there we encamped for the night. Next morning we marched in without any resistance, and took up our quarters in camp in sight of the Russians, wishing every day to get at them. Our regiment and the 13th Light Dragoons were out foraging, when we came across double our number of Cossacks. We had a sharp conflict with them, but they retired after losing twelve men, whilst we only had one man slightly wounded. I got some little trophies, which I afterwards sold to Lord George Paget, of the 4th Light Dragoons. That was the first money I had seen in the Crimea. Things went on quietly for about a month, necessaries getting scarcer and scarcer, and wishing every day that we could get at the enemy. On the 24th, the day before the famous charge, we thought the Russians were coming; but it was a feint. We were ready for them, however. On the morning of the 25th we turned out as usual, and were just turning into our lines when we heard the firing of guns and musketry. Presently we saw the Russian cavalry charging towards our heavy brigade, and the Turks running as fast as they could from our guns in Nos. 1, 2 and 3 redoubts, leaving the field open to the Russians, who came on in thousands. But Captain Maude's troop of Horse Artillery did good work, and our Heavy Brigade did well also. I don't think there was a man in the Light Brigade but wished to assist, but could not until ordered. At last, Captain Nolan, riding at full speed, came towards our Brigadier, Lord Cardigan. Major Morris (17th) and Colonel Dougherty, 13th Light Dragoons, were talking together mounted, when the word to mount was given. The order was quickly obeyed. Walk, trot, gallop, was sounded by Lord Cardigan's trumpeter, Wm. Britton, who on that day was killed. Captain Nolan had not gone above 400 yards when he was shot, the first to fall in our charge. Just as we got to No. 1 redoubt, my right-hand man, Walter Brooks, was also shot. He was my comrade for over three years, from the time I went to 4th troop. We got a bit further, when my left-hand man fell. My blood was up, and I began to wish to get near the

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enemy. Shot and shell were coming in all directions. What few reached the guns—and I amongst them—cut away like madmen and succeeded in taking and spiking them. Some sound being heard, which I took for rally, the signal to retire, we got together what few we could, but going back was worse than coming, for a regiment was drawn across our path, and guns were playing upon us. Coming back I was attacked by two Cossacks. I engaged the one on my right, and despatched him at the time the other made a cut at me which just caught my nose, chin, and bridle hand; but he never cut another, for I left him on the ground. Going a little further my horse was shot beneath me, and I lay weltering in blood and swooned. I should think I must have lain there two or three hours before I came to. I did not know where I was until a French sentry challenged me, and I was taken to the French doctor, who dressed my wounds. I did not get to my own lines tell next day, and then I was made much of by the few who were left. We had to shift camp, and the next night there was a turn out. I went to the doctor, who examined my wounds and did all he could for me, but there were plenty worse than me. A few days afterwards we were ordered up to the front for safety, for there were very few left, and on the 5th November, 1854, I was at the battle of Inkerman, where, out of the few remaining members of our regiment, one officer, Lieutenant Cleveland, and one private, Fred Robinson, were killed, and Jack Sweeney lost his arm; two more being slightly wounded, leaving the muster forty-three all told. The few that were left had to put up with anything—short rations both for man and horse, besides having to water our horses under fire, and getting what little water we could in calabashes. On the 14th November, 1854, a hurricane swept our men to the ground, and there were only Thomas Clark and I, in our troop, that would turn out. I carried a sick man fully a quarter of a mile, and placed him between two rocks until I ran to the French camp and got him some brandy. He told me that I saved his life, and I think I did, though he died after the Mutiny; the man's name was T. Callaghan. T. Clarke, in London, will also state to anyone that I saved his life. He left Troop-Sergeant Major, and is one of

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© PA

An appalling series of misunderstandings led to the Brigade advancing down a different valley from the one commander-in-chief, Lord Raglan, had intended when he dictated ambiguous orders for Lord Lucan, the cavalry commander.

Despite the fact that the order seemed to demand the cavalry to attack the Russian artillery without infantry support - in contravention of all accepted laws of military practice - an incredulous Lucan passed the instructions on to the Earl of Cardigan, who commanded the Light Brigade, and the troops advanced.

Although it only lasted around 20 minutes, the attack saw almost a fifth of the Light Brigade killed, and hundreds more wounded.

It is thought to have come about after Lord Lucan and the Earl of Cardigan, who were in charge of the cavalry in the battle, were given a confusing order by Lord Raglan, the British commander.

The Light Brigade had been meant to ride to the rescue of British guns which had been captured and were being dragged away by Russian forces.

But due to a misunderstanding they instead though they had been given the suicidal task of capturing well-defended Russian guns much further away.

As they rode towards the distant emplacement, their men were torn apart by Russian marksmen and shell fire. To the surprise of their foes, they did manage to reach the massed guns and inflict some damage, but were so depleted that they had to turn back and retreat.

Lord Tennyson's poem, written based on breathless newspaper dispatches from the front, memorably expressed the bravery of ordinary soldiers as they rode to their doom. It captured the public mood, and was distributed to soldiers in Crimea while they were still fighting.

Sgt Butler penned: 'At last Captain Nolan, riding at full speed, came towards our Brigadier, Lord Cardigan...word to mount was given. The order was quickly obeyed.

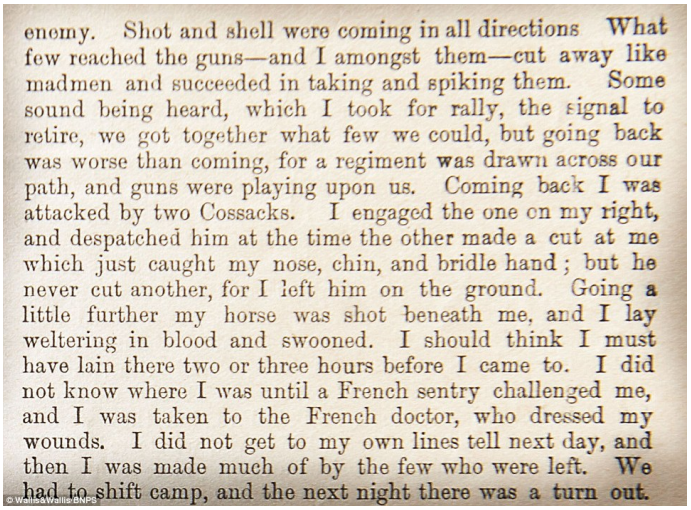
'Walk, trot, gallop, was sounded by Lord Cardigan's trumpeter, Wm. Britton, who on that day was killed.

'Captain Nolan had not gone above 400 yards when he was shot. Just as we got to No. 1 redoubt, my right-hand man, Walter Brooks, was also shot. We got a bit further when my left-hand man fell.

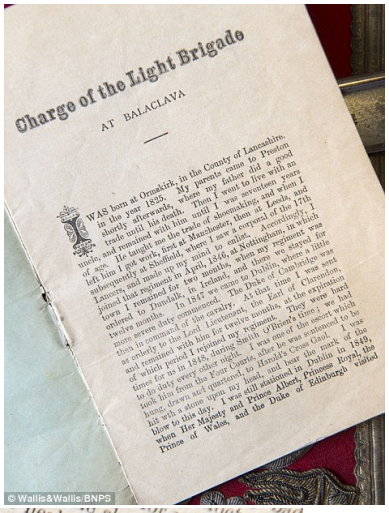
'My blood was up and I began to wish to get near the enemy. Shot and shell were coming in all directions. What few reached the guns - and I amongst them - cut away like madmen and succeeded in taking and spiking them.

'Some sound being heard which I took for rally, the signal to retire, we got together what few we could, but going back was worse than coming, for a regiment was drawn across our path, and guns were playing upon us.

'I was attacked by two cossacks. I engaged the one on my right and despatched him at the time the other made a cut at me which just caught my nose, chin and bridle hand; but he never cut another, for I left him on the ground.


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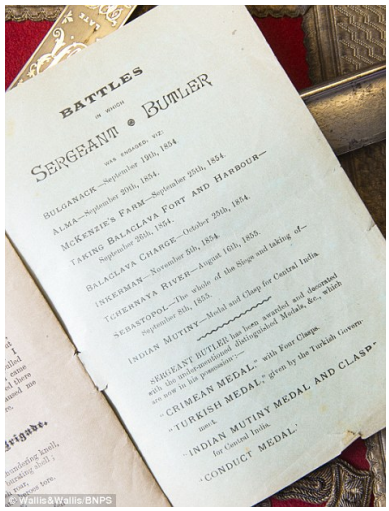
Under fire: When the order came to retreat, Sgt Butler was attacked by two Russian cossacks but he despatched them with his lance before they could kill him. His own horse was then shot from under him, he writes in this dramatic extract


Charge of the Light Brigade

AT BALACLAVA

Service: Sgt Butler reveals details of his life before he joined the military (left) and the awards he received (right)

Unwavering bravery: The Motto of the 17th Lancers is also included in the graphic account of the Charge of the Light Brigade


BATTLES

in which

SERGEANT ✱ BUTLER

was engaged, viz.

BULGANACK—September 20th, 1854.

ALMA—September 20th, 1854.

MCKENZIE'S FARM—September 25th, 1854.

BALACLAVA PORT AND HARBOUR—

TAKING BALACLAVA CHARGE—October 25th, 1854.

BALACLAVA CHARGE—November 5th, 1854.

INKERMAN—November 5th, 1854.

TCHERNAYA RIVER—August 16th, 1855.

SEBASTOPOL—The whole of the Siege and taking of—

September 8th, 1855.

INDIAN MUTINY—Medal and Clasp for Central India.

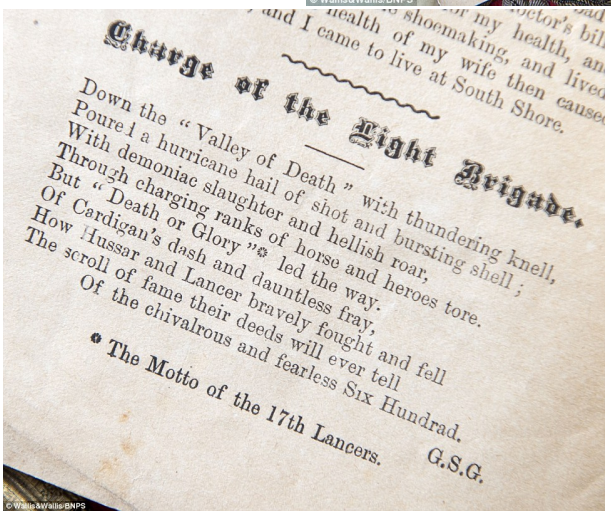
SERGEANT BUTLER has been awarded and decorated with the undermentioned Distinguished Medals, &c., which are now in his possession:—

"CRIMEAN MEDAL," with Four Clasps.

"TURKISH MEDAL AND CLASP."

"INDIAN MUTINY MEDAL AND CLASP."

"CONDUCT MEDAL."


Charge of the Light Brigade.

Down the "Valley of Death" with thundering knell,
Poured a hurricane hail of shot and bursting shell;
With demoniac slaughter and hellish roar,
Through charging ranks of horse and heroes tore.
But "Death or Glory"* led the way.
Of Cardigan's dash and dauntless fray,
How Hussar and Lancer bravely fought and fell
The scroll of fame their deeds will ever tell
Of the chivalrous and fearless Six Hundred.

* The Motto of the 17th Lancers. G.S.G.

'Going little further my horse was shot beneath me and I law weltering in blood and swooned.'

When the order came to retreat, Sgt Butler was attacked by two Russian cossacks but he despatched them with his lance before they could kill him.

His own horse was then shot from under him and he was eventually rescued from the battlefield.

Sgt Butler wrote how the survivors then faced the harsh Russian winter, starving and frost-bitten. Conditions were so dire their horses started eating each other and the men didn't care if they lived or died, he said.

Sgt Butler returned to England in 1855 and was deployed to India two years later where he saw the horrors of the Indian Mutiny.

He received a special mention for killing 12 rebel soldiers who were ransacking an Indian village before being almost killed by how own side after he and his horse were mistaken for the enemy.

The account is being sold by auctioneers Wallis and Wallis of Lewes, East Sussex.

Roy Butler, of the auction house, said: 'William Butler charged and survived and decided to do a personal publication of his own many years ago.

'It was just a pamphlet book and only a handful were printed. Never mind the films and books that have been produced about the Charge of the Light Brigade, this is a vivid and graphic account by someone who was there.'

The account is being sold on October 11.

Comments (82

The comments below have not been moderated.

Farenuff, Perth, Australia, about 8 hours ago

Proof that one British soldier is worth 2 Russian soldiers.

Concerned Patriot, Chichester, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

A guest - there always has to be someone who has contempt for his own country. IF it IS your own country. The whole thing was a disaster, yes, but the men were incredibly brave.

TravelinMan, England, United Kingdom, about 2 hours ago

So says a couple of aussies who have no idea. You are beneath contempt. Those brave soldiers rode into the mouth of those guns because they were ordered to do so by their foolhardy leader, Cardigan. But they did as ordered, just as millions did in two world wars. You should be bloody ashamed. If you believe what you wrote, then the australian soldier must be worth far more than two Russians. Just to prove that anyone can write rubbish. Just F off.

pugsey, brisbane, Australia, about 13 hours ago

It was all Nolan's fault .When Cardigan questioned the order Nolan just waved his arms around and said 'There sir there are you guns" When he saw they were charging the wrong guns he galloped after Cardigan,who always led from the front,to try to stop the charge but was the first killed so the charge continued.

Tom Plunkett, Hull, United Kingdom, 31 minutes ago

Not entirely, it was Lord Raglan's fault for drafting a badly-written and confusing order which took no account of the fact that the man to whom it was addressed, Lord Lucan, was some distance away and could not see what Lucan could from his higher viewpoint. When told to attack and take the Russian guns the only one's he could see were at the end of the valley whereas the guns Lucan was talking about were out of sight to him. Nolan played his part in the error by not being specifc enough when he realised the Light Brigade were heading down the wrong valley, but then he and Lucan hated one another, as did Lucan and Lord Cardigan. All this mutual loathing did not make for good communications between the senior officers on the day of the battle. Having said all that it is

always forgotten that the Light Brigade did actually reach their objectivem the guns, spiked many of them and killed their crews and not only that but attacked and routed a larger force of Russian cavalry behind them.

Paul, Leeds, United Kingdom, about 15 hours ago

These days he would have been locked up for killing the two Cossacks.

Robb, Fulton, about 15 hours ago

Not all that unlike the Scots' experience at the ignominious Battle of Flodden. Because the English followed a 'take no prisoners' rule, the surviving Scots were brutally slaughtered.

The Old Man, London, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

Don't be a twit. No comparison at all.

Juanyd, Ballasalla, Isle Of Man, about 17 hours ago

A comment by a French officer who witnessed the Charge of the Light Brigade "It is magnificent, but it is not war" sums up the futility of unsupported cavalry against entrenched artillery.

username42, Saarfffff, United Kingdom, about 18 hours ago

So why did the men follow the obviously stupid order? It would have been more heroic to refuse and point out the the futility of the action.

Alfie, London, United Kingdom, about 2 hours ago

Lieutenant Nolan rode across the lines trying to tell Cardigan he was going the wrong way but was immediately killed by a shell splinter. He was an intelligent and experienced soldier and had written an army manual on cavalry tactics. He should have been in command! By the way most soldiers in the Crimea died in the open of diseases such as cholera. The officers had it easy. Cardigan slept on his yacht every night.

Tom Plunkett, Hull, United Kingdom, 29 minutes ago

Not a bad post but not every Officer had a yacht, most of them shared the privations of their men by and large.

The charge was all the fault of Cardigan, ie an aristocrat, that's what happens when we let idiots be in charge just because of who they were born from. Just like the royal idiots. If they had a democratic choice of leader, a more sensible working class guy would have been in charge, and we might have won?

TravelinMan, England, United Kingdom, about 2 hours ago

Cardigan bought his army and had no idea of tactics.

Tom Plunkett, Hull, United Kingdom, 23 minutes ago

Cardigan was an aristocrat and a fool but he was also extremely brave and arguably the finest horseman in England. It was most certainl NOT his fault, he was a subordinate commander with Lord Lucan above him and Lord raglan at the top. It was Raglan's contradictory order that started teh ball rolling, and arguably Lucan is somewhat to blame for not querying the order, and of course Nolan for realising too late that he'd indicated the wrong valley to Lucan. Cardigan knew full well they were heading into a death-trap, he commented "Here goes the last of the Brudenells" when the order was given (his family name) but it would not have occurred to him to disobey an order from a superior officer and off he went at the head of the Light Brigade. He rode right up and into the guns with the rest of the brigade after which he turned and rode back alaong the valley, saying later taht it was not the job of a senior officer to engage in hand-to-hand fighting. He wasnt being cowardly, he meant it.

Alfie, London, United Kingdom, about 19 hours ago

The bugler who sounded the Charge was William (Billy) Brittain. He did not die that day but was horribly wounded. He died months later in Florence Nightingale's hospital at Scutari near Constantinople. Due to very poor nursing he died not of his wounds but of bedsores! His bugle was brought back to Dublin by his brother who was in the Scots Greys. It remained in our family for many years but is now in the regimental museum in Grantham....Des Brittain.

Peaky Blinder, Lancashire, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

Barney, the person who sounded the charge was Orderly Trumpeter to Lord Raglan, Trumpeter William Brittain and it was sounded on a Henry Potter's of Aldershot bugle. The call was then repeated by other trumpeters through the lines. It much later came into the possession of the actor Lawrence Harvey, who donated it to The QRL Museum in 1964. He had a fanatical interest in the battle and owned the film rights at one stage! The difference between a bugle and a trumpet is that from the bell a trumpet is straight and has valves, whilst a bugle is conical and no valves. I am pedantic too and used to toot a bugle in the scouts many years ago!

Tom Plunkett, Hull, United Kingdom, 12 minutes ago

Peaky Blinder: Not quite, a Cavalry trumpet as used at the time by a trumpeter doesn't have valves? Its not the same thing as the trumpet you'd find played in a Military band by a Bandsman, a trained musician. You're right about the call being sounded by a number of people though, Brittain was Lucan's Orderly Trumpeter that day and would have sounded the charge to the Brigade but the call would have been repeated by Trumpeters in each regiment of the brigade. Not only that, but the "charge" would not have been the first call blown, that would have been the Advance, then the Trot and only when they got within 50 yards of the guns would the Charge have been sounded. The brigade didn;t gallop the lenght of the valley, much of it was done at the walk in fact. For obvious reasons.

Alfie, London, United Kingdom, about 19 hours ago

The name of Lord Cardigan's bugler was William (Billy) Brittain from Dublin. He did not die that day but was horribly wounded. He died four months later in Florence Nightingale's hospital at Scutari of bedsores due to poor nursing. His bugle was brought home by his brother and was in our family for years. It is now in the Regimental Museum in Grantham.

Peaky Blinder, Lancashire, United Kingdom, about 10 hours ago

Alfie. Can you enlarge on the provenance of the bugle. I am sure the museum would be interested. As far as I know it was brought back from the Crimea by Billy's brother (?) and later sold by auction to a licensee before Harvey gained possession of it. By coincidence the Trevor Howard starring film was on tv last night.

Alfie, London, United Kingdom, about 2 hours ago

I have read that the bugle, and it WAS a bugle, was made in Dublin. Billy was from Dublin and his father had served 35 year in the army as a farrier. It was sold around 1905 to a publican, Mr. Baker, of Newcastle and was displayed behind the bar of the Percy Arms for many years. It disappeared for years and turned up at auction in the mid sixties as the movie was being made. It was bought jointly by Laurence Harvey and the American showman Ed Sullivan. I have actually had a toot on it. The best book on the Charge, in my opinion, is Terry Brighton's "Hell Riders".

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Cult of Weird

Chasing the Ghost of Al Capone

By Tea Krulos on October 11, 2016

If you're looking for the ghost of Al Capone, these five places are where you're most likely to encounter the spirit of the legendary gangster.



Chasing down the ghost of Al Capone

There is no more famous name in American crime history than Al Capone, the powerful mob leader who ruled Chicago through a haze of cigar smoke with an iron fist. Larger than life, Capone died in 1947, but some say his strong will and personality has carried on beyond the grave.

According to various witnesses, Capone's ghost can be found traversing thousands of miles in the afterlife, showing up at a variety of his old haunts. Here are just a few of the places where it is claimed you might have an encounter with Alphonse Gabriel Capone—former gangster, bootlegger, racketeer, head of the Chicago Outfit, and potential wandering spirit.

Eastern State Penitentiary

Philadelphia, PA



The cell of Al Capone in Eastern State Penitentiary

Al Capone's prison cell in Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary

Al Capone's ghost stories begin when he was still alive. Capone's mob executed the brutal Saint Valentine's Massacre on Feb. 14, 1929. Capone's men, dressed as policemen, entered a garage on Chicago's North side owned by Capone's rival George "Bugs" Moran. There they told seven of Moran's men to stand and place their hands against the garage wall where they were gunned down in a hail of machine gun fire. It was a sensational, sick story of violence that made the general public call for an end to mob violence. Capone himself was soon rounded up and sentenced for carrying a dangerous, concealed weapon. He was sentenced to serve time and spent 8 months at Eastern State Penitentiary from 1929-1930.

Capone was provided with a lavishly furnished cell, complete with oriental rugs and a cabinet radio, but suffered in a different way. The story goes that Capone was tormented by the ghost of James Clark, one of the victims of the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre. Clark was Moran's brother-in- law, and legend says Capone could be heard at night by other inmates begging Jimmy to leave him alone. Stories say the ghost of Jimmy Clark continued to dog Capone after he was released from Eastern State, following him around to harass him.

The penitentiary was also known for its cruel torture practices to inmates, such as dousing them with cold water in winter months, chaining their tongues to their wrists, and leaving them strapped tightly to chairs for extended periods of time. They also had a solitary confinement room called "The Hole," where they would be held without light, human contact, and little food. The prison was abandoned in 1971 and remains a favorite spot for paranormal investigators.

Maribel Caves Hotel aka "Hotel Hell"
Maribel, WI


Maribel Caves Hotel, also known as Hotel Hell, in Maribel, WI

Built in 1900, the Maribel Caves Hotel, renamed by local youth as the "Hotel Hell" was rumored to have been owned by Capone who used it as a front for his bootlegging business, along with the water bottling plant next door. Maribel, a town of about 350 people, is located in rural Wisconsin, which was a favorite hideout destination for many Chicagoland criminals. Capone's ghost, trapped in his bootlegging days, is said to still frequent the grounds, and a well on the property is said to be a "portal to hell."

In actuality, the therapeutic spa and hotel was open until the 80s, when fire destroyed the interior and just left the outer stone structure in place. The eerie, fire scorched building developed into local urban legend. Teens daring each other to enter the allegedly supernatural location became a pastime for bored rural youth or adventure seekers on a road trip. Unfortunately, not much is left to see of the Hotel Hell. Only a small part of the building remains standing—a 90 mph windstorm destroyed most of the structure in 2013.

Bachelors Grove Cemetery
Midlothian, IL


Bachelors Grove Cemetery

Bachelors Grove Cemetery. Photo: Matt Hucke/Wikipedia

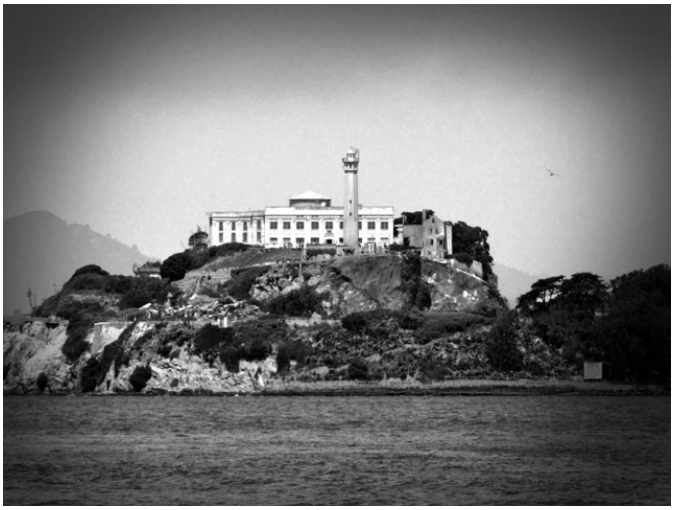
Ask any experts on Chicago ghostlore and one of the first places they'll point you is to one of Illinois's most haunted plots of land, Bachelors Grove Cemetery, established sometime around 1840 near the suburb of Midlothian. It's located down a short trail that leads through the woods to the graveyard, surrounded by a chain-link fence and a lagoon covered in thick algae on one side.

Claims of activity here are quite substantial. One of the most interesting pieces of ghost evidence is a photo taken in the cemetery in 1991 by Chicago group Ghost Research Society. Using infrared film, they captured what appears to be the ghost of a forlorn woman in a white dress, sitting on top of a headstone.

The land is supposedly crowded with entities— there's reports of flying balls of light, a disembodied crying baby has been heard, a ghost of a farmer and his horse has been seen plowing the ground, a phantom farmhouse appears and disappears, and even a two headed spirit has been spotted. It is also said that Al Capone and his gang used the secluded cemetery's lagoon to dispose of dead bodies they accumulated during Prohibition. Now, Al Capone's cigar chomping ghost will put in an occasional appearance, wandering by the graveyard's lagoon.

Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary
San Francisco, CA

In 1931, Capone was sentenced to 11 years prison time and was sent to Cook County Jail before being transferred to a federal prison in Atlanta. Sick of Capone's ability to leverage the system, the decision was made to transfer "Public Enemy Number One" to America's most famous prison, Alcatraz, where Capone was to be just another name and number.



Alcatraz

Capone was shipped off on a prison railroad car to the Rock in 1934. After settling in, Capone filled his time by playing banjo in the prison band. He often practiced playing the banjo in the empty shower room. Tour guides and visitors have reported hearing a ghostly banjo twang in the shower room and from his cell B-181 (later renumbered B-206).

Other gangster ghosts have been spotted—"Machine Gun" Kelly in the prison's chapel and Alvin "Creepy" Karpis in the prison bakery and kitchen. D-block is considered to be a hotspot for ghosts by several paranormal investigation teams.

Suffering declining health from an untreated case of syphilis, Capone was transferred to the Federal Correctional Institute of Terminal Island before being released in 1939. He retired to Palm Island, Florida to live out the rest of his life.

Mount Carmel Cemetery
Hillside, IL



The grave of Al Capone in Mount Carmel Cemetery, Hillside, IL

Al Capone's grave in Mount Carmel Cemetery. Photo: ericvv/Creative Commons

Capone died on January 25, 1947. His final resting place, alongside other members of the Capone family, is the eerie Mount Carmel Cemetery. Besides Capone, a rogue's gallery of other mobsters, like Frank Nitti, Sam Giancana, and "Machine Gun" Jack McGurn, suspected of being one of the executers of the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre. Visitors often leave a small gift on Capone's grave—a cigar, flower, coins, bottles of alcohol. Be respectful when visiting—if you're not, it's rumored Capone's ghost will chase you out.

The cemetery is also home to Julia Buccola Petta, "the Italian Bride." Petta died in 1921 during childbirth and was buried here in her wedding dress (a Sicialian custom), along with her still born baby. The story goes that after her death, Julia's mother, Philomena, began having a series of intense dreams of her daughter pleading with her to exhume her body. After asking various officials, Philomena finally was able to exhume Julia's grave six years later and found that her body was perfectly intact, as fresh as the day it was buried. The grave is marked with a statue of a woman holding a bouquet of flowers on top of it. Porcelian photographs on the base of her tomb show Julia on her wedding day and again after she was exhumed. An inscription in Sicilian translates as "What is this strange photograph taken six years after her death?" Since her reburial, Julia's spirit has been spotted several times wandering around Mount Carmel.

Al Capone's ghost will also haunt the Milwaukee Paranormal Conference where he'll be discussed as part of the "Wisconsin's Wildest Urban Legends" panel, sponsored by Cult of Weird. Guest speaker Ursula Bielski will also be giving a talk on her research of Bachelors Grove cemetery for her new book "Haunted Bachelors Grove." More info: milwaukeeparacon.com

Tea Krulos is a freelance journalist and author from Milwaukee. His books include *Heroes in the Night* and *Monster Hunters* (both available from Chicago Review Press). He is also the director of the Milwaukee Paranormal Conference.

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Thief stole couple's £120k car to pull girls, returning each time with full tank

13:25, 24 Oct 2016 Updated 13:25, 24 Oct 2016 By Rachel Bishop

mirror.co.uk



Cheeky thief repeatedly 'borrowed' Range Rover too PICK UP GIRLS

A cheeky thief repeatedly stole a couple's £120,000 Range Rover only to return it every morning clean and with a full tank of petrol.

Zhang, 19, got away with the crafty act until he carelessly "borrowed" the vehicle for two nights in a row, sparking the wealthy owners' suspicions.

Wealthy Wang from Hangzhou, China, rang police when he noticed his Range Rover missing from its spot in an underground car park one evening.

When police came to investigate they were shocked to learn the car, worth about 1 million RMB (£121,021) turned up the next morning in immaculate condition - and even with the petrol tank filled.



AsiaWire

Zhang in the underground car park after returning the Range Rover

They inspected surveillance footage and found the suspect waltzing into the car park at around midnight, skilfully driving the car away and returning at 6am the following day.

They waited in the underground car park and caught Zhang in the act as he arrived to return the car from a third consecutive night out and detained him for theft.

Zhang told police that he had never intended to actually steal the car, and that he had been using it to impress friends and women while posing as a wealthy bachelor around the city's famous West Lake.

Zhang, 19, driving the £120k car out the car park

Wang and wife Liu, are said to own at least five luxury vehicles and use them regularly for social events.

After learning the rich couple's routine, Zhang forged a pair of car keys and began taking the car out at night, according to reports, taking it to the carwash and bringing it back in perfect condition so the owners would not notice it had been missing.



AsiaWire

Zhang was also found to have keys to other luxury vehicles on his person and has been jailed for 15 days.

In addition, he was fined 500 RMB (£60) and could face further charges after investigators found him to be a repeat offender with previous records of theft.

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Chelsea bun sent to soldier 100 years ago in WW1 found in perfect condition

23:09, 21 Oct 2016 Updated 23:09, 21 Oct 2016 By Louie Smith

mirror.co.uk



SWNS

The Chelsea bun is in perfect condition

As war mementoes go, this one is certainly not to be scoffed at…

A Chelsea bun sent to a soldier at the Somme 100 years ago has been found in perfect shape.

It had been posted to Private Alex Hodges by his sister Lily Poston but never reached him as he was injured by a shell and sent to a London hospital to recover.

The uncooked bun, made by the soldier's favourite baker, was returned to Lily and she kept it in a box for decades.

It was recently found by his daughter Hazel Hodges, 84, of Leominster, Herefordshire.



SWNS

The Chelsea bun was sent to Private Alex Hodges, but never reached him

She said: "Lily knew my father was extremely fond of Chelsea buns from Mrs Pewtree's bakery in the town so she put one in a care parcel and sent it to the front.

But my father had moved on by the time it arrived and so it came back to her address in the same little brown box.

"She kept it on the sideboard in her house until her death. I inherited the box but never knew what was in it. I opened it out of curiosity and found the bun inside.



SWNS

The bun has recently been found by Alex's daughter

"It was stale but other than that is was in excellent - condition. It brought back all the memories of my father."

Alex, who fought with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry during the First World War , was invalided out of the Army after being badly wounded in the shell blast. He died in Leominster in 1979.

But Hazel said the bun, which she has donated to the town's museum, serves as a permanent reminder of her dad.

She added: "It obviously means a lot to me because it was intended for my father, who adored Chelsea buns."

DailyMirror

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The Chevalier d'Eon - National Portrait Gallery

npg.org.uk

National Portrait Gallery

National Portrait Gallery



Chevalier d'Eon
by Thomas Stewart, after Jean Laurent Mosnier
1792
NPG 6937

A soldier, diplomat and transvestite, the Chevalier d'Eon was one of the most colourful and celebrated characters in eighteenth-century Britain. Although born in France, he lived in London from 1762-1777 as a man, and from 1786-1810 as a woman. During both these periods he was a noted figure in international politics, high society and popular culture.

D'Eon first came to London in 1762 as part of the French embassy and helped negotiate the Peace of Paris, which ended the Seven Years War. Despite being awarded the Croix de St Louis, he refused to return to France when recalled. Instead, d'Eon published secret correspondence that revealed French ministerial corruption and blackmailed the French King by threatening to disclose secret information about French invasion plans. To silence him, Louis XVI offered him an official pension in 1775 but made the unprecedented condition that d'Eon should henceforth dress as a woman. This command was probably due to rumours, encouraged by d'Eon himself, that he was a woman. He reputedly attended cross-dressing balls during a previous diplomatic mission to Russia and bought corsets for himself while living as a man in London.

D'Eon's new identity as a woman brought him even greater fame. He returned to Britain in 1785 and forged a new career performing fencing demonstrations. Popular prints show him fencing in a black dress like the one in this portrait, and, as here, he wore his Croix de St Louis during these fights. In England there was constant speculation and wagering about his sex. It was even the subject of a court trial that declared D'Eon to be a woman. Because the stereotype of a woman dressing as a man to join the army, often in pursuit of her sweetheart was widely recognised, the idea of d'Eon as a woman was accepted. Despite his lack of feminine 'delicacy', he was upheld by pioneering feminists such as Mary Robinson and Mary Wollstonecraft as a shining example of 'female fortitude' to which British women might aspire.

This portrait is a copy of one painted by Jean-Laurent Mosnier in 1791. It shows d'Eon at the height of his fame, wearing the full cockade of a supporter of the French Revolution. In 1792, the year of this copy, d'Eon wrote to the new French National Assembly, offering to lead an army of 'Amazon' women against France's enemies. This letter was widely reported in the British press and d'Eon was praised for his courage and patriotism. His sympathy for the new regime in France ended, however, with the execution of the French royal family.

D'Eon's celebrity status was in itself a considerable achievement. He was the first openly-transvestite man in British history and no transvestite or transsexual, until the late twentieth century, has enjoyed such public recognition. *The Annual Register* wrote of him, 'It must indeed be acknowledged that she is the most extraordinary person of the age ... we have seen no one who has united so many military, political, and literary talents.'

© National Portrait Gallery, London 2016

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Catholic Church's chief exorcist who banished 70,000 demons dies aged 91

18:14, 19 Sep 2016 Updated 18:16, 19 Sep 2016 By Laura Connor mirror.co.uk

The Pope's chief exorcist 'who banished 70,000 demons' and said Vatican was possessed by devil dies aged 91



Getty

Tributes have been paid to the Catholic Church 's leading exorcist Father Gabriele Amorth, who died on Friday at the age of 91.

The Pope's chief exorcist, who once said the Vatican is possessed by the devil, claimed to have carried out an incredible 70,000 'exorcisms' over his 30-year career.

Father Amorth also claimed Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin were both possessed, saying: "The Devil is invisible. But in the people he possesses he can be seen through pain and blasphemies.

"Sometimes he makes fun of me, but I have to say I enjoy my work."

He was also ridiculed for saying that yoga was evil and Harry Potter promoted black magic.

He added that a string of child sex abuse scandals which rocked the Catholic Church were proof Satan is living among religious leaders.

The inspiration for spirit-busting priests in hit movies such as The Exorcist said: "The Devil lives in the Vatican. He has won over the confidences of people.

"The consequences are visible. We have cardinals who don't believe in Christ, bishops connected with demons. We have these stories of paedophilia."



Warner Bros

Father Amorth is said to have inspired films such as The Exorcist

The Italian priest said reading Harry Potter "opens children's minds to dabbling with the occult and black magic".

Describing a meeting with him in 2005, journalist Francesco Casadei, 52, said he "lost control and started to kick and scream" adding that after four months of sessions the devil left him.

In a Times obituary, he is quoted as saying: "During the exorcisms Father Amorth was a ferocious beast, but afterwards he turned back into a

mild-mannered man who liked a joke."

Another person to have been at the receiving end of his exorcisms corroborated that he was funny man.

The man, known only as Alberto, said: "Father Amorth would say, 'You know why the devil flees when he sees me? Because I'm uglier than he is'."

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China full-beam drivers punished by dazzling - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

- 2 November 2016



Drivers who are caught are also slapped with a fine

Image copyrightShenzhen Traffic Police/Weibo

Police in southern China are punishing drivers who dazzle other road users with full-beam headlights by making them stare into the lights for a minute, it's reported.

Shenzhen Traffic Police posted photos of the campaign in action on their official Weibo account. "Tonight we are carrying out punishments using a high beam," the post reads. It's racked up 87,000 likes and been shared 93,000 times. The photos show people sitting directly in front of a car with its headlights on.

Official media say drivers are fined 300 yuan ($44; £36) and made to spend 60 seconds in front of the beam. But some news websites have suggested that the headlight element is optional, although it's unclear why people would choose it on top of paying a fine.

The force faced criticism for a similar initiative in 2014, but nonetheless decided to start it up again on Tuesday. This time around, the reaction has been largely positive. Several other local police forces gave it the thumbs-up on their social media accounts, and a poll on the mainstream Sina news portal found that 90% of people approved.

On the Weibo microblogging site, many people agree. "Am I the only one who thought a minute was too short?" reads one comment, which garnered 12,000 likes from other users. Another person feels the campaign is "long overdue", while one berates "selfish, inconsiderate drivers". A few people are concerned that the punishment could seriously damage eyesight, and one declares: "This is a human rights violation".

Shenzhen's traffic police have opted for unconventional penalties before. Last year, they made jaywalkers choose between paying a fine or wearing a green hat and vest while directing traffic.

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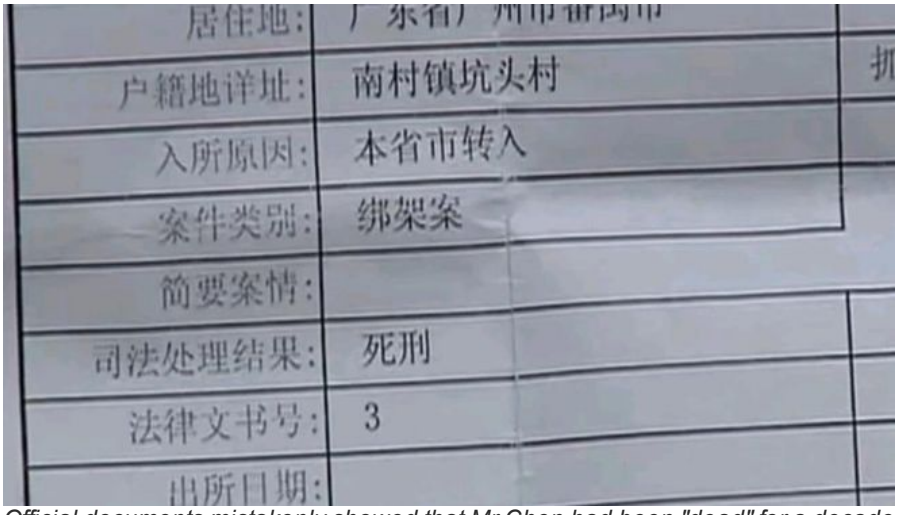
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China police tell man he was executed 10 years ago - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

- 8 August 2016



Official documents mistakenly showed that Mr Chen had been "dead" for a decade

Image copyrightGuangzhou Radio and Television Network

Chinese officials have confused a man with a similarly named criminal who's been dead for 10 years, despite a government campaign to crack down on "repeat identities".

The 45-year-old, identified in Chinese media as Mr Chen, applied for a certificate to show he had no criminal convictions for his new job in Guangzhou. But the police refused his application as they said records showed he was convicted and executed in 2006 for kidnapping. Reporters from the Guangdong Radio and Television Network later found that the conviction belonged to another man with the same name and identity card number.

Despite such a record, Mr Chen says he's been living a normal life since his "execution" a decade ago and hasn't experienced any difficulties before. "I was even allowed to apply for a travel permit to Hong Kong and Macau from the government," he told the broadcaster, adding: "All these things are just puzzling." Guangzhou police said there had been a mistake and issued him with the certificate.

The mix-up over the two Chens is one of the more extreme cases of "repeat identity" in China, caused when an administrative error gives citizens an identity card number that's already been issued. The Ministry of Public Security has been eradicating such cases as part of a campaign which ended in June, and Xinhua News Agency says there are now fewer than 10 repeat identity card numbers, down from some 1.1 million in 2009.

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NBA Hall of Famer Yao Ming appointed as China's ambassador to Mars [VIDEO]

Yao Ming is appointed as one of the China's ambassador to Mars ahead the 2020 Mars mission by the China National Space Administration.

By Menahem Zen menahem.zen@gmail.com | Oct 17, 2016 07:55 AM EDT



Yao Ming reacts during the 2016 Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Ceremony at Symphony Hall on September 9, 2016 in Springfield, Massachusetts. (Photo : Getty Images/Jim Rogash)

Yao Ming is appointed as one of China's ambassadors to Mars along with ten other individuals. They were selected onward the 2020 Mars mission by the China National Space Administration.

Yao and ten other celebrities including the coach of the women's Olympic gold-medal-winning volleyball team Lang Ping and China's famous composer and conductor Tan Dun, as reported by **South China Morning Post**.

Other appointed ambassadors are maestro of Chinese traditional instrument guzheng Yuan Sha, award-winning science-fiction writer Liu Cixin, three members of the Chinese boy band TFBOYS, and opera singers Warren Mok, Dai Yuqiang and Wei Song.

China first announced its Mars 2020 mission earlier this year. The mission will to carry a solar-powered probe to the surface of Mars using Chinese-made Long March-5 rocket. The rocket will be launched from the Wenchang Space Centre in Hainan province, southern China.

As an ambassador to Mars, Yao Ming and the ten other members is appointed with a task to help encourage interest in China's 2020 unmanned mission to Mars according to

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Former NBA player Yao Ming appointed as China's ambassador to Mars [VIDEO]



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LET'S CONNECT HNGN

Chinese newspaper People's Daily Online and quoted by **Daily Mail**. The ambassador is also expected to promote the advancement science and technology in China.

China has aimed to explore the red planet to study its features. The China National Space Administration has unveiled its orbiter, lander and rover for its first unmanned mission to Mars last August. The goal of the first unmanned mission is to study its atmophere, soil and environment in Mars.

The mission will be launched in 2020 and expected to reach Mars by 2021. The orbiter which will carry the lander and rover will take on the seven months journey. Subsequently, it the lander will separate iself from orbiter and landing in a low latitude area in the northern hemisphere of Mars. Afterwards, the rover which is designed to operate for three Martian months will explore the surface of the planet.

Yao and 10 other celebrities were appointed as the ambassador to encourage interest on the mission and encourage the science and technology in China.

Watch the news of Yao's appointment as China's ambassador to Mars from **News Beat Social** below:

China Appoints 11 Ambassadors to Mars to Promote Country's M...

Tags: space , yao ming , mars , mars mission

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Doubtful News

Chiropractic “accident” resulted in death

October 19, 2016

34-year old Katie May died after visiting a chiropractor last February. The coroner calls it an “accident” that she suffered an “infarction of the brain, a type of stroke, and a vertebral artery dissection” due to neck manipulation. Chiropractors regularly do neck manipulation – not by accident.

Playboy model’s death ‘ruled an accident’ after suffering injuries from chiropractor

The model hurt her neck and went to a chiropractor, as many do, to get help. This treatment, typically sharp twists of the neck, caused a blunt force injury, tearing her left vertebral artery, and cutting off blood flow to her brain, according to the death certificate reported on by entertainment news and gossip site TMZ. The family may be considering legal action.

This type of claim, that chiropractic caused a serious, potentially deadly, health situation is somewhat rare but certainly not unique. Neck trauma has been reported multiple times and is a real risk of chiropractic that is too often not made known to those who undergo the therapy. This study [PDF] recounts the experiences of 36 patients who experienced the effect. A 30-yr old Oklahoma man died after chiropractic treatment. The autopsy reports the cause was acute cerebellar infarction due to manipulation of the neck. An Alabama man received a jury-awarded settlement after he suffered a post-chiropractic stroke. He also said he was not told of the risk. Another man noticed serious symptom after a chiropractic neck adjustment and collapsed due to a stroke. Sandra Nettles, a 40-yr old Canadian woman sued after suffering a stroke after rapid neck manipulation which nearly paralyzed her. She not only wrote a book about it but her case caused the province of Manitoba to consider banning the practice. Hercules TV actor Kevin Sorbo also attributed his stroke to chiropractic manipulation.

Neck manipulation, and possibly all of chiropractic, is considered medically unnecessary. Why take the risk in getting a dangerous therapy when there is even a small potential it can cause you serious harm? **Don’t let the chiropractor crack your neck**. Better yet, ditch the chiro altogether. Seek science-based medical care instead, one that has some evidence that it can work.

Hopefully, this tragedy leads to the eventual banning of chiropractic neck adjusting.

Tip: Dr. Hagen

Related

Another case of neck trauma reported after chiropractic manipulationJanuary 6, 2015In "Alternative Medicine"

Man suffers stroke after neck manipulation by chiropractorOctober 3, 2012In "Alternative Medicine"

Neck manipulation outed as "clinically unneccessary"June 8, 2012In "Alternative Medicine"

idoubtit

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Man rushed to doctor with chopstick stuck in his penis

metro.co.uk

Toby Meyjes for Metro.co.ukSaturday 12 Nov 2016 1:15 pm



Apparently, he was too shy to approach the doctor about the problem (Picture: Getty)

Man rushed to doctor with chopstick stuck in his penis

A man who was too shy to approach the doctor about blood in his urine got a chopstick stuck in his penis trying to identify the problem.

The man, named Chen, had rammed the seven-inch stainless-steel chopstick so far into his genitals that he couldn't remove it, Asia Wire reported.

Scans showed the chopstick had been inserted so far it reached the man's rectal wall, Fox News said, and could have killed him if it had been inserted any further.

The chopstick was successfully removed and the patient, who is from Hangzhou in China, is recovering in the hospital.

It is not known if he suffered any long term damage.

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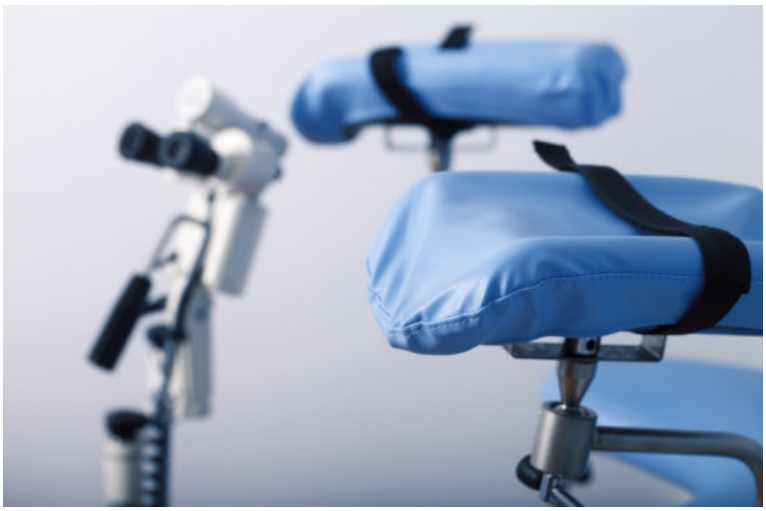
Complaint: Citing Catholic Rules, Doctor Turns Away Bleeding Woman With Dislodged IUD - Rewire

rewire.news

Aug 27, 2016

Aug 23, 2016, 6:23pm Amy Littlefield

“It felt heartbreaking,” said Melanie Jones. “It felt like they were telling me that I had done something wrong, that I had made a mistake and therefore they were not going to help me; that they stigmatized me, saying that I was doing something wrong, when I’m not doing anything wrong. I’m doing something that’s well within my legal rights.”



Jones left her doctor’s office, still in pain and bleeding. Her options were limited. She couldn’t afford a $1,000 trip to the emergency room, and an urgent care facility was out of the question since her Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois insurance policy would only cover treatment within her network—and she had just been told that her entire network followed Catholic restrictions.

Melanie Jones arrived for her doctor’s appointment bleeding and in pain. Jones, 28, who lives in the Chicago area, had slipped in her bathroom, and suspected the fall had dislodged her copper intrauterine device (IUD).

Her doctor confirmed the IUD was dislodged and had to be removed. But the doctor said she would be unable to remove the IUD, citing Catholic restrictions followed by Mercy Hospital and Medical Center and providers within its system.

“I think my first feeling was shock,” Jones told *Rewire* in an interview. “I thought that eventually they were going to recognize that my health was the top priority.”

The doctor left Jones to confer with colleagues, before returning to confirm that her “hands [were] tied,” according to two complaints filed by the ACLU of Illinois. Not only could she not help her, the doctor said, but no one in Jones’ health insurance network could remove the IUD, because all of them followed similar restrictions. Mercy, like many Catholic providers, follows directives issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that restrict access to an array of services, including abortion care, tubal ligations, and contraception.

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Some Catholic providers may get around the rules by purporting to prescribe hormonal contraception for acne or heavy periods, rather than for birth control, but in the case of copper IUDs, there is no such pretext available.

“She told Ms. Jones that that process [of switching networks] would take her a month, and that she should feel fortunate because sometimes switching networks takes up to six months or even a year,” the ACLU of Illinois wrote in a pair of complaints filed in late June.

Jones hadn’t even realized her health-care network was Catholic.

Mercy has about nine off-site locations in the Chicago area, including the Dearborn Station office Jones visited, said Eric Rhodes, senior vice president of administrative and professional services. It is part of Trinity Health, one of the largest Catholic health systems in the country.

The ACLU and ACLU of Michigan sued Trinity last year for its "repeated and systematic failure to provide women suffering pregnancy complications with appropriate emergency abortions as required by federal law." The lawsuit was dismissed but the ACLU has asked for reconsideration.

In a written statement to *Rewire*, Mercy said, "Generally, our protocol in caring for a woman with a dislodged or troublesome IUD is to offer to remove it."

Rhodes said Mercy was reviewing its education process on Catholic directives for physicians and residents.

"That act [of removing an IUD] in itself does not violate the directives," Marty Folan, Mercy's director of mission integration, told *Rewire.*

The number of acute care hospitals that are Catholic owned or affiliated has grown by 22 percent over the past 15 years, according to MergerWatch, with one in every six acute care hospital beds now in a Catholic owned or affiliated facility. Women in such hospitals have been turned away while miscarrying and denied tubal ligations.

"We think that people should be aware that they may face limitations on the kind of care they can receive when they go to the doctor based on religious restrictions," said Lorie Chaiten, director of the women's and reproductive rights project of the ACLU of Illinois, in a phone interview with *Rewire*. "It's really important that the public understand that this is going on and it is going on in a widespread fashion so that people can take whatever steps they need to do to protect themselves."

Jones left her doctor's office, still in pain and bleeding. Her options were limited. She couldn't afford a $1,000 trip to the emergency room, and an urgent care facility was out of the question since her Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois insurance policy would only cover treatment within her network—and she had just been told that her entire network followed Catholic restrictions.

Jones, on the advice of a friend, contacted the ACLU of Illinois. Attorneys there advised Jones to call her insurance company and demand they expedite her network change. After five hours of phone calls, Jones was able to see a doctor who removed her IUD, five days after her initial appointment and almost two weeks after she fell in the bathroom.

Before the IUD was removed, Jones suffered from cramps she compared to those she felt after the IUD was first placed, severe enough that she medicated herself to cope with the pain.

She experienced another feeling after being turned away: stigma.

"It felt heartbreaking," Jones told *Rewire.* "It felt like they were telling me that I had done something wrong, that I had made a mistake and therefore they were not going to help me; that they stigmatized me, saying that I was doing something wrong, when I'm not doing anything wrong. I'm doing something that's well within my legal rights."

The ACLU of Illinois has filed two complaints in Jones' case: one before the Illinois Department of Human Rights and another with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights under the anti-discrimination provision of the Affordable Care Act. Chaiten said it's clear Jones was discriminated against because of her gender.

"We don't know what Mercy's policies are, but I would find it hard to believe that if there were a man who was suffering complications from a vasectomy and came to the emergency room, that they would turn him away," Chaiten said. "This the equivalent of that, right, this is a woman who had an IUD, and because they couldn't pretend the purpose of the IUD was something other than pregnancy prevention, they told her, 'We can't help you.'"

Tell us your story. Have religious restrictions affected your ability to access health care? Email stories@rewire.news

Jun 22, 2016, 7:53pm Nicole Knight

The legislation amends the state Health Care Right of Conscience Act to require religiously affiliated facilities to inform patients in writing about health-care providers "who they reasonably believe" offer procedures that the institutions will not perform.



The patient information measure, HB 1564, comes at a time when roughly 30 percent of hospital beds in the state—and one in six in the nation—are in Catholic institutions that bar certain reproductive health and end-of-life treatments, according to recent figures from the advocacy group MergerWatch.

Religiously affiliated hospitals in Illinois must advise patients where they can find treatments that the institutions won't offer on religious grounds, under new legislation sitting on the governor's desk.

The patient information measure, SB 1564, comes at a time when almost about 30 percent of hospital beds in the state—and one in six in the nation—are in Catholic institutions that bar certain reproductive health and end-of-life treatments, according to recent figures from the advocacy group MergerWatch.

The legislation amends the state Health Care Right of Conscience Act to require religiously affiliated facilities to inform patients in writing about health-care providers "who they reasonably believe" offer procedures that the institutions will not perform, or to refer or transfer patients to those alternate providers. Hospitals must do this in response to patient requests for such procedures. The legislation cleared the state house on a 61-54 vote and the senate on a 34-19 vote. Democrats control both chambers.

The office of Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner (R) did not respond to request for comment on whether he would sign the bill.

Catholic facilities often follow U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops religious directives that generally bar treatments such as sterilization, in vitro fertilization, and abortion care. The federal Church Amendment and some state laws protect these faith-based objections.

Even so, growing concerns over facilities that deny treatment that patients want—and that doctors advise—has recently prompted lawmakers in Illinois, Michigan, and Washington state to advance patient information measures.

A Michigan lawsuit now on appeal alleges a Catholic facility caused unnecessary trauma by denying a patient treatment. In 2010, then-18-weeks pregnant Tamesha Means arrived at a Catholic hospital, Mercy Health Partners in Muskegon, Michigan, bleeding and miscarrying. On two occasions, the hospital turned away Means, as *Rewire* reported. It wasn't until Means started delivering on her third hospital visit that she received treatment.

The Illinois legislation represents a compromise among the Illinois Catholic Health Association, the Illinois State Medical Society, and the Illinois affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), representatives from the groups told *Rewire*.

Lorie Chaiten, director of the ACLU of Illinois' Reproductive Rights Project, said in an online statement that the legislation "protects patients when health care providers exercise religious refusals."

Research indicates that patients aren't always aware that religiously affiliated facilities don't provide a full spectrum of reproductive health services, according to a 2014 paper published in *Contraception*.

Patrick Cacchione, executive director of the Illinois Catholic Health Association, said the organization, which represents the state's 43 Catholic hospitals, opposed an early version of the bill requiring religious health-care

facilities to give patients a written list of known medical providers that perform the treatments that the religious institutions oppose.

Cacchione said such a direct referral would have made Catholic hospitals “complicit.”

“We will provide all the information you need, but we will not make a direct referral,” he told *Rewire* in a phone interview Monday. The new version of the legislation does not require hospitals to confirm that providers perform the treatments; the facilities must only have a “reasonable belief” that they do.

He said Illinois hospitals are already doing what the legislation now requires.

Approximately one in five doctors surveyed at religiously affiliated institutions “had experienced conflict with the institution over religiously based patient care policies,” according to the 2010 paper, “Religious Hospitals and Primary Care Physicians: Conflicts Over Policies for Patient Care,” published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*.

In an emailed statement, Dr. Thomas M. Anderson, a Chicago radiologist and president of the Illinois State Medical Society, told *Rewire*, “The Society strongly believes physicians should be able to exercise their right of conscience and changes made to SB 1564 protect that right.”

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The City That Wasn't

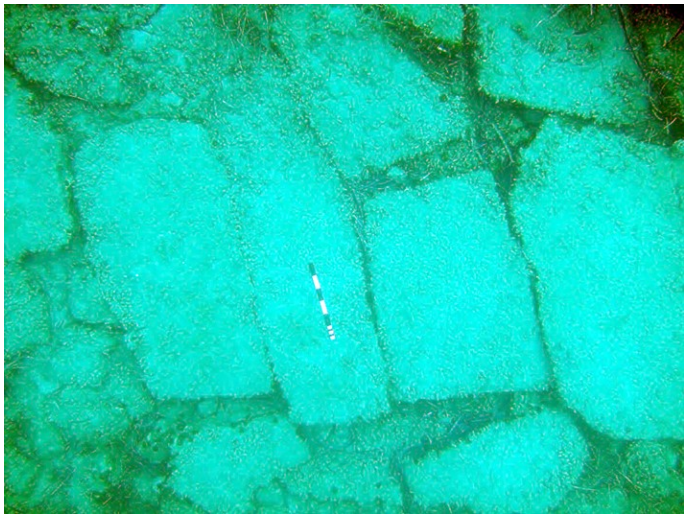
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By DANIEL WEISS

Monday, August 15, 2016



Formations discovered in shallow water off the coast of the island of Zakynthos in the Ionian Sea were initially thought to be the remains of an ancient Greek city. However, there is a puzzling absence of artifacts such as



(Courtesy Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities)
Dolomite "column" (top) and "paving stones" (above)

ceramic sherds among what appear to be columns and paving stones to indicate that people had ever actually lived there. Now researchers have subjected these “structures” to a range of tests, and found that they are indeed extremely old, but they certainly weren’t made by the ancient Greeks.

“The first few photographs I saw really did look as if they might be columns and paving slabs,” says Julian Andrews, an environmental scientist at the University of East Anglia, “but as I saw more images, it was clear they probably weren’t.”

Based on carbon isotope analysis of a sample of the formations, Andrews and his colleagues determined that they were formed by microbes that use hydrocarbons seeping through the seafloor, most likely methane, as nourishment. These bacteria lived around 16 feet below the seafloor at the time, in an oxygen-free environment. Their waste helped transform the sediment around the seeps into a natural cement-like substance known as dolomite. In the years since, the sediment eroded away, exposing the formations.

Analysis of strontium isotopes in the sample helped the researchers determine when they were created. “We can be reasonably confident they’re no older than the Pliocene Epoch,” says Andrews, “so they’re probably no older than

four million years."

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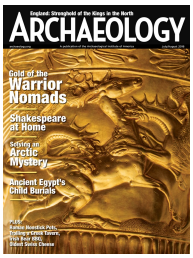
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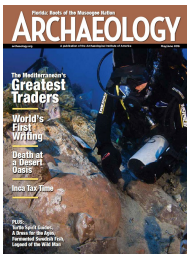
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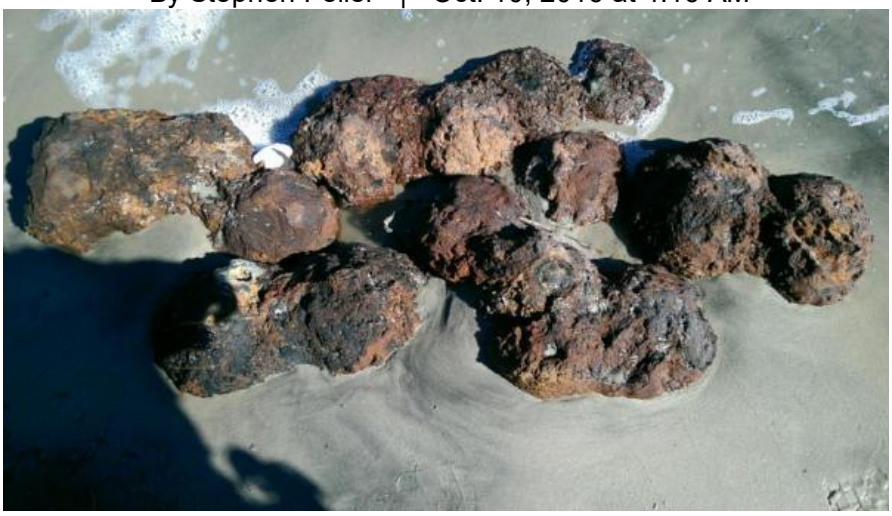
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Civil War cannonballs found on South Carolina beach after hurricane

upi.com

Officials from the county sheriff's office and the U.S. Air Force detonated the cannonballs before taking them to the nearby Naval Base.

By Stephen Feller | Oct. 10, 2016 at 4:16 AM



Fifteen Civil War cannonballs were found on a beach in South Carolina after Hurricane Matthew passed, according to authorities, who detonated most of the explosives before transporting a small number of them to the nearby Naval Base. Photo by Charleston County Sheriff's Office

FOLLY BEACH, S.C., Oct. 10 (UPI) -- Cannonballs from the Civil War were found on a beach in South Carolina after Hurricane Matthew passed over the state, according to officials.

The Charleston County Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Air Force Explosive Team confirmed the finding of an "old Civil War Ordnance" at Folly Beach in South Carolina, detonating some and taking others to the nearby Naval Base, authorities reported.

Former Folly Beach mayor Richard Beck found the cannonballs -- there were 15, welded together by rust -- during a walk on the beach investigating the storm's effects. Beck called police to investigate the cannonballs, which were identified as such by an officer who is a Civil War reenactor.

"I knew they were cannonballs," Beck said. "One of them had a very distinct hole in it that went directly into it. Just knowing a little bit about the Civil War, I know that they put fuses in cannonballs for them to explode when they desired them to."

Officers started investigating the scene around 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, confirming they were cannonballs, they could not detonate them until around 7:00 p.m. because of the tide.

Officials at Joint Base Charleson were expected to receive and destroy the remaining cannonballs on Sunday night, according to Eric Watson, a spokesperson for the sheriff's office.

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The Clegg Hall Boggart

lancashirefolk.com

Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history
Posted on July 27, 2016 by LancashireFolk



Clegg Hall

It is lovely to report that this wonderful Hall on Clegg Hall Road, which at one point was very close to dilapidation, has been lovingly restored and is once again a glorious building. The photo above shows it very close to completion. It is in private hands and so cannot be visited, but one can still walk down the lane which runs by it and gain a satisfying view.

Anyone who is familiar with Clegg Hall will also be familiar with the boggart which is said to haunt it – indeed, it is so well-known that it has passed into common parlance as a synonym for someone visiting often; 'Here I am again, like t'Clegg Hall Boggart!'

This boggart was actually a ghost, the shade of an ancient member of the Clegg family who, some time in the 14th century, murdered his two young orphaned nephews in order to gain Clegg Hall for himself. It is said that he threw them over a balcony and into the moat, where they drowned. He was subsequently stricken with guilt about this double murder and his ghost (not those of the children) continues to haunt the hall and its grounds.

The room where the murders were committed was, of course, the most haunted and whilst many families inhabited Clegg Hall over the centuries, few people ever slept in that room again. Eventually a priest was called upon to exorcise the boggart, with whom he had a mysterious conversation. The boggart agreed to leave but only on the condition that a sacrifice was made of a body and a soul. The clever priest agreed, but substituted the body of a cock and the sole of a shoe! The bargain worked and the boggart departed, but only for a while, for even when the oldest part of the hall was demolished entirely, the boggart ghost continued to walk.

Another version of this tale, in a ballad written by William Nuttall, has the children's ghosts exorcised by St Anthony, using a relic from Our Lady's shrine. However, that would imply that there were multiple boggarts, and in the tradition (rather than the embellished ballad versions), there was only ever one…

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Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history - author of 'Lancashire Folk' published by Schiffer Publishing Winter 2015 - 9780764349836 £17.50. 'Manchester Folk', covering Greater Manchester, coming in 2017!

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Cleveland Indians get boost from newborn babies in onesies

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press October 26, 2016

CLEVELAND (AP) — Newborn babies at an Ohio hospital have joined the ranks of Cleveland Indians fans.

The Cleveland Clinic says at least five babies born Tuesday at its Fairview Hospital were dressed in World Series onesies. It says babies born throughout the World Series at several of its hospitals will be dressed in the outfits to help cheer on the Indians' quest for a championship as they take on the Chicago Cubs.

The first game of the series was won by Cleveland 6-0 on Tuesday night.

The clinic says babies at its Hillcrest, Main Campus SDU, Medina and Cleveland Clinic Akron General hospitals also are receiving the onesies.

The outfits feature a baseball design accompanied by the words "World Series Baby" and the hashtag #RallyTogether.

The Cubs haven't won the World Series since 1908, the Indians since 1948.

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Clifton Suspension Bridge: Vast hidden vaults open to the public - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC • 8 August 2016

http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-37007820



Image copyrightClifton Suspension Bridge Trust

In November 2002, workmen discovered two tiers of 12 Victorian chambers in the 110-feet tall south tower on the Leigh Woods side of the gorge

Vast vaults discovered under the Clifton Suspension Bridge have opened to the public for the first time.

The 12 vaulted chambers were found in 2002, nearly 140 years after the crossing was opened in Bristol.

It was assumed for decades that the massive two-storey abutments which support the bridge towers were solid stone or filled with stone.

Now, after drilling through 2m (6.5ft) stonework and installing a doorway, two chambers have been opened for tours.

The two tiers of sealed up chambers were discovered by chance by a builder who was replacing paving stones around the Leigh Woods tower nearly 15 years ago.

Since then all of the rubble in the lower chamber of the abutment has been "hoovered" out using a suction truck and the site made safe.

Media captionTwelve vaulted rooms inside Brunel's famous bridge are opened to the public.

Laura Hilton, the bridge's visitor services manager, said: "Brunel made sure it would last but he didn't consider that people would have to go into the vaults to perform any kind of maintenance, so there was no entranceway to them at all."

Image copyright Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust
Image caption Built using lime mortar, the vaulted chambers are filled with stalagmites and stalactites - calcite deposits dripped down through the brickwork
Image copyright Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust
Image caption No construction drawings survived and as the vaults were sealed, their existence was not rediscovered until 2002

Connected by a network of narrow tunnels, Ms Hilton said the massive two-storey abutment was "quite a strange place to go inside".

"The largest chamber that we can go into is tall enough to stack three double-decker buses inside," she said.

"It's almost like a cathedral and because it was built using lime mortar it's filled with stalagmites and stalactites so it's just amazing to go inside."

Copyright © 2016 BBC.

Image copyright Clifton Suspension Bridge Trust

Trump Ally Alex Jones: "I Was Told By People Around" Clinton That "She's Demon-Possessed"

mediamatters.org



Trump Ally Alex Jones: "I Was Told By People Around" Clinton That "She's Demon-Possessed"

From the October 10 edition of Genesis Communications Networks' *The Alex Jones Show*:

> ALEX JONES (HOST): I'm never a lesser of two evils person, but with Hillary, there's not even the same universe. She is an abject, psychopathic, demon from Hell that as soon as she gets into power is going to try to destroy the planet. I'm sure of that, and people around her say she's so dark now, and so evil, and so possessed that they are having nightmares, they're freaking out. Folks let me just tell you something, and if media wants to go with this, that's fine. There are dozens of videos and photos of Obama having flies land on him, indoors, at all times of year, and he'll be next to a hundred people and no one has flies on them. Hillary, reportedly, I mean, I was told by people around her that they think she's demon-possessed, okay? I'm just going to go ahead and say it, okay?
>
> They said that they're scared. That's why when I see her when kids are by her, I actually get scared myself, with a child -- with that big rubber face and that -- I mean this woman is dangerous, ladies and gentleman. I'm telling you, she is a demon. This is Biblical. She's going to launch a nuclear war. The Russians are scared of her.
>
> [...]
>
> Imagine how bad she smells, man? I'm told her and Obama, just stink, stink, stink, stink. You can't wash that evil off, man. Told there's a rotten smell around Hillary. I'm not kidding, people say, they say -- folks, I've been told this by high up folks. They say listen, Obama and Hillary both smell like sulfur. I never said this because the media will go crazy with it, but I've talked to people that are in protective details, they're scared of her. And they say listen, she's a frickin' demon and she stinks and so does Obama. I go, like what? Sulfur. They smell like Hell.

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Cloudspotter thinks this looks like an angel

17:53, 20 Oct 2016 Updated 17:53, 20 Oct 2016 By Kara O'Neill

mirror.co.uk



Is this an Angel in the sky?

A man who spotted a cloud formation in the shape of an angel claims the bizarre phenomenon was a sign from God.

Cory Hearon was picked his wife up from work in South Carolina when he saw the cloud out of the corner of his eye.

Upon closer inspection, Cory says the formation looks exactly like an angel , completely with intricate wings and a face.

It was at this point that he decided to take out his phone and stream his video on Facebook Live.



Cory Hearon/Facebook

Some viewers believe the cloud was sent by God

In the video, Cory said: "You can almost see a face. I'm seeing an angel, I don't know if anyone sees anything different."

Hundreds of viewers commented on Cory's video, with many believing the cloud was a sign from God.

Cory claims the cloud shape is actually an angel

One wrote: "God is good. Thank you Cory for sharing with all of us.

Another added: "That is God showing us his Angels.. That looks like a face ,body and wings... Beautiful!!! This made my day!!! And that feather is like pointing to it...wowwww."

The video has now been viewed more than 7.6 million times on Facebook.

DailyMirror

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Cory Hearon/Facebook

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Palm Bay woman reports clown encounter at park

PALM BAY –

mynews13.com

Palm Bay woman reports clown encounter at park



palm_bay_clown_sighting_092716_a

A Palm Bay woman said this hole was cut in a fence at a neighborhood park on Shenandoah Road, where she said 2 people dressed like clowns were peering over from a wooded area Sunday, Sept. 25. (Greg Pallone, staff)

By Greg Pallone, Reporter
Last Updated: Tuesday, September 27, 2016, 7:20 PM EDT

Mark Brevard County as the location of another reported scary clown sighting.

Kelly Reynolds of Palm Bay was on a Sunday evening stroll with her dog, Brindle — part of a route that takes them by her neighborhood park a block away on Shenandoah Road.

Something spooked the dog, and Reynolds turned to look.

"She stopped and started growling," Reynolds said. "They were standing right back there (pointing), two of them, staring at me."

Two people dressed like clowns — peering over from a wooded area near a fence — which someone had cut a hole through to get inside the park.

"They had, like, hobo clothes on, with white makeup and blood on it. A skull cap and gloves with the fingers sticking out," she said.

Reynolds dropped the leash and told her dog to run away with her.

She got back home and called police.

Even more concerning: At any given time, the park is full of children.

"They come after school and play, and now you can't trust anything," Reynolds said.

This is the only reported clown sighting in Palm Bay, but there are other sightings in seven states around the country.

Police in those areas are warning of possible sexual predators posing as clowns to lure kids.

"They are deranged," Reynolds said.

Palm Bay Police say they aren't looking at charges as of yet. Anyone who sees anything suspicious is asked to report it.

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'Clown Lives Matter' peace walk canceled after multiple threats

TUCSON, Ariz.

fox5ny.com

FOX

Posted: Oct 13 2016 08:40AM EDT

Updated: Oct 17 2016 08:21AM EDT

- The organizer of an upcoming "Clown Lives Matter" peace walk has canceled the event, citing multiple threats.

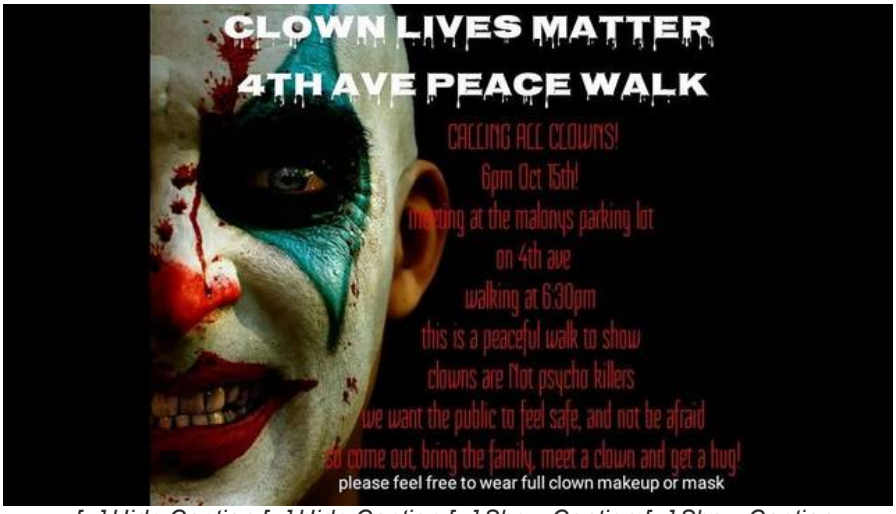


creepyclown_1476362364527-408200.jpg

Nikki Sinn posted the announcement to one of her Facebook pages.

The Facebook event itself has been deleted.

The pro-clown event was meant to show that "clowns are not psycho killers," and quickly made national headlines.



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Read more at TucsonNewsNow.com.

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Clown reportedly attempting to lure kids into woods of SC community

Published: Sunday, August 28th 2016, 5:49 pm PDT
Updated: Sunday, August 28th 2016, 5:49 pm PDT

By Michael Campbell, Digital Content Producer CONNECT

(WWBT) - Police and parents in one South Carolina community are taking reports of a clown allegedly attempting to lure kids into the woods very seriously.

According to CNN affiliate WHNS, mother Donna Arnold told Greenville, SC. deputies that her son and some other people in the Fleetwood Manor Apartments complex saw a clown lurking behind a basketball court.

"I thought my child was seeing things, and then the next day I had about 30 kids come up to me and say 'did you see the clown in the woods?'"

"They finally sent people out here to check, they found some evidence," she said.

Arnold told WHNS that she was walking back home when she spotted the clown waving at her. After news of the sightings made their way around the complex, officials did not take it lightly.

WHNS sent a flier warning to residents, urging them to make sure their children are supervised and to keep them inside during nighttime hours.

Clowns might sound silly, but it's a situation parents are not finding funny. They want the clowns caught.

"That's why am over here, to make sure law enforcement is doing something because we've have about 2-300 children out here and I want to make sure that law enforcement is doing the right thing," community activist Bruce Wilson said to WHNS.

Police have increased their patrols in the area in an effort to protect the community.

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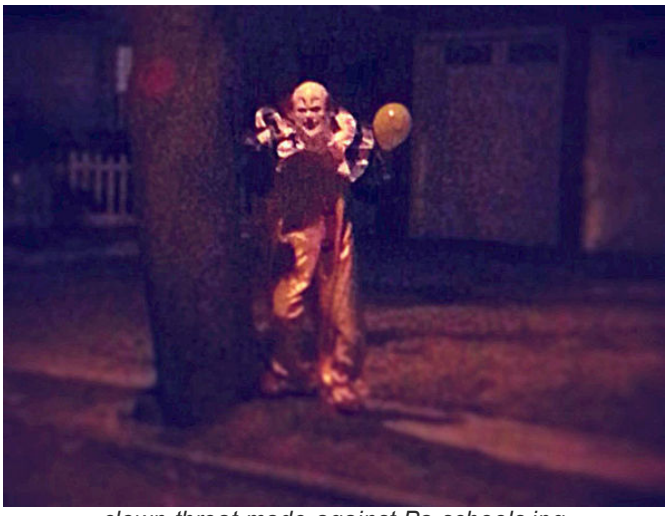
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'Clown panic' largely fueled by unverified reports, state police say

By Teresa Bonner | tbonner@pennlive.com | Follow on Twitter on October 04, 2016 at 11:24 AM, updated October 04, 2016 at 12:02 PM

pennlive.com



clown-threat-made-against-Pa-schools.jpg

Police and school officials in Philadelphia aren't laughing after a flurry of clown-related social media posts over the weekend that seemed to threaten schools in the city. *(File)*

Reports of "creepy clown" sightings, accompanied by little or no evidence that they are legitimate, are fueling "a clown panic" throughout the country, according to a state police bulletin issued Tuesday.

A number of clown-related social media posts last weekend contained threats toward schools, in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. Some threatened Philadelphia area schools, including an Instagram post made through an account called Clown of Philly that threatened to "shoot all the students and teachers" at a Catholic high school in Philadelphia.

Spooky clown sightings unsettle Pa. towns: Why we're afraid

Clearly, the cultural perception of clowns has changed from Baby Boomers raised on Bozo the Clown to a new generation scared to death by Stephen King's Pennywise the Clown from "It."

Most of the social media posts were attributed to a "clown joke," possibly linked to numerous clown sightings throughout the U.S. and around the world, according to the state police bulletin.

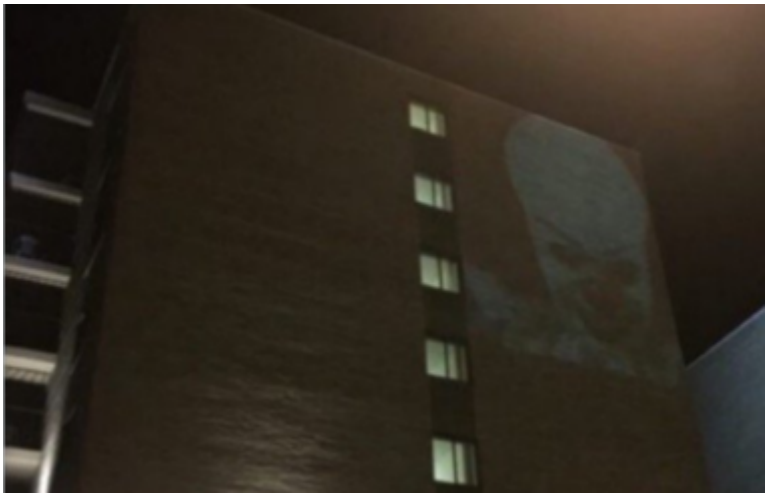
The state police emphasize: "These sightings have not been validated and there are no known threats to school in Pennsylvania. Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to their closest police department."

Reports of "creepy clowns," largely unsubstantiated, have been made around the country, and around the world in the last few months. Reported sightings of clowns – ranging from clowns standing on a street and not moving to clowns attempting to lure children into wooded areas — have occurred in Wisconsin, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, Missouri, Colorado, Oregon, and Texas, state police say.

Media coverage is encouraging people to get involved in the phenomenon, state police warn. Over the past two weeks at least 12 people were arrested in Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia for making false reports of clown threats or chasing people while costumed.

State police also note this is not the first clown scare the country has seen.

"In the 1980s, clown sightings were reported in Boston, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Arlington Heights, among many other areas. Upon further investigation, police noticed that most, if not all the clown sightings, were witnessed only by children between the ages of five and seven," the bulletin states.



Clown sighting at Penn State ignites raucous 'clown hunt' by students

Clown sighting at Penn State ignites raucous 'clown hunt' by students

Reports Monday of a clown sighting at Old Main, Penn State students swung into action, with hundreds taking part in what appeared to be a fun-filled and raucous 'clown hunt' late last night and into this morning.

State police encourage reporting of suspicious activity by calling the toll-free Pennsylvania State Police Terrorism Tip Line at (888) 292-1919, or via email at tips@pa.gov. There's also a smartphone application, "See Something, Send Something," to help fight terrorism. The app allows suspicious activity to be captured as a photograph or written note and sent to police.

The app also contains information on what to look for and when to report suspicious activity.

PennLive logo

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Clown sightings reported in Pa. county, police investigating

Nick Vadala
20160922

philly.com

The Inquirer DAILY NEWS

Updated: September 21, 2016 — 4:28 PM EDT

State police in Huntingdon County are now investigating reports of a suspicious clown spotted throughout the area, and urge residents to "use restraint," should they have a sighting.

In a release issued Wednesday, police indicated that an unspecified number of “clown sightings” has prompted an investigation into the matter. No details about the specific locations of the sightings were immediately available, and description of the clown was not provided.

There have been “no threats made” by the clown in question, but police ask that anyone who spots a person dressed as a clown walking around the area call the police at 814-627-3161 to report the sighting.

In the release, police also asked that the public “use restraint and allow police to handle the situation.” PennLive reporter Joe Elias first reported the news.

The apparent Huntingdon County sightings are not the first in Pennsylvania. In Schuylkill County earlier this week, police received reports that clowns had been harassing children. In Cambria County, meanwhile, a woman claims to have been peeped on through her window by a creepy clown in teal. Sightings were also been reported in Luzerne County this week.

Suspicious clown sightings have cropped up nationwide recently, with communities in Alabama, Georgia, Wisconsin, Florida, Ohio, Virginia, and North and South Carolina, among others, making reports throughout the summer. In South Carolina alone, Police recently received about a dozen reports of creepy clowns.

Some sightings, however, have been outed as false reports, leading to speculation about whether the sightings are hoaxes. This month in Georgia and North Carolina, police arrested and charged several people over giving false statements regarding clown sightings.

- Girl with knife at school says she feared clown attacks

Sep 21 - 6:45 AM

- Alabama school locked down after threat of clowns showing up

Sep 19 - 12:17 PM

- Police: Reports of clowns trying to lure children in Ga. is a hoax

Sep 15 - 6:54 AM

Published: September 21, 2016 — 12:11 PM EDT | **Updated:** September 21, 2016 — 4:28 PM EDT

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Creepy clown stunt goes wrong as man with balloons 'takes savage beating'

11:21, 8 Oct 2016 Updated 13:49, 8 Oct 2016 By Zahra Mulroy , Jon Dean

mirror.co.uk

Creepy clown stunt goes horribly wrong as prankster 'takes savage beating trying to scare friends'



Clown tries to scare a car full of lads but gets BEATEN with baseball bat instead

A creepy clown stunt went terribly wrong when a young man trying to spook his friends apparently took a savage beating.

In the video, a group of young men are seen driving along a dark road when the sinister clown approaches.

The macabre creature shuffles in front of the car, clutching a bedraggled bunch of balloons, forcing the vehicle to stop.

In a mixture of fear and bravado, the lads begin to wonder what they should do.



YouTube / Hakeem McFarlane

The sinister figure shuffles along the road



YouTube / Hakeem McFarlane

The lads set about the clown with a baseball bat

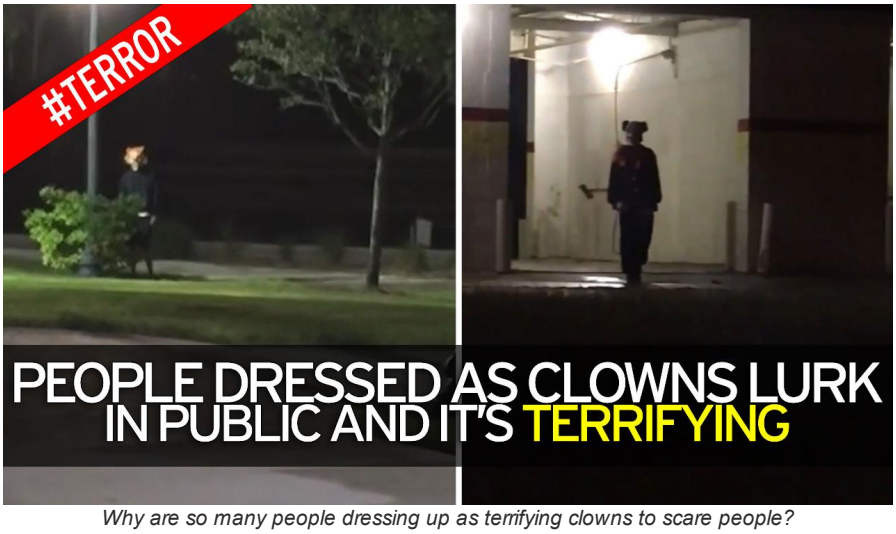
"What the f**k is that, bro?" one of the man says, while another advises "run him over."

Suddenly the two back seat passengers get out and appear to savagely attack the clown.

One wields a baseball bat and seems to smash it square into the clown's face.

The men flee the scene - leaving the stricken clown clutching himself on the tarmac.

A worrying spate of creepy clown sightings in the past week has captured the public's imagination.



Why are so many people dressing up as terrifying clowns to scare people?

The trend began in America but it has spread across the Atlantic and gained traction in the UK.

While it may seem a harmless or even amusing event, it is giving police serious cause for concern.

The trend has even stretched as far as Australia - this clown was seen in Perth

A number of the incidents have seen 'clowns' actively terrorising members of the public - with some even apparently armed with knives - as the problem takes on a genuinely menacing air.

The activities reported range from simple sightings of 'clowns' frightening people in passing cars to more sinister incidents where the fancy dress figures have approached schoolchildren .



YouTube / Hakeem McFarlane YouTube / Hakeem McFarlane Getty



Disturbing video appears of a clown in Australia as craze SPREADS worldwide

MirrorOnline has compiled a map of the most significant reported sightings so far.

When pinpointed on a map, it reveals that the incidents have all happened across the north of England and Wales.

Creepy Clowns UK



YouTube / Hakeem McFarlane YouTube / Hakeem McFarlane Getty

Key

1. Newcastle : A teenager dressed as 'creepy clown' arrested for allegedly carrying blade and terrorising children on 30 September.

2. Newcastle : A girl was terrified when chased by prankster on 4 October.

3. Caernarfon : A school boy films a creepy clown hanging around near kids' play centre in the dead of the night, 5 October.

4. Manchester : A clown in blood-spattered poncho was spotted on 6 October.

5. Sheffield : Another creepy clown sighted on a shop mobility scooter, 6 October.

6. Liverpool : A number of creepy clowns threaten to loiter outside school 7 October.

7. Chester-le-street, Co. Durham : A man with a knife in clown attire jumps out at kids, 7 October.

There have been other sightings reported in Sudbury, Clacton and Leeds.

The trend's escalation is such that even the Cheshire Police issued a statement.

"We are aware of the current trend in America of people dressing up as clowns, which has reached the UK and received some publicity in the media.

"We have a very small number of reports relating to this phenomenon, here in Cheshire, and we're also aware of rumours that are circulating on social media.

"While we appreciate Hallowe'en is just a short time away, scaring people - especially children and vulnerable people - in this way is completely unacceptable and could constitute an offence."

Creepy clowns are sweeping the UK, and our map shows each sighting

Why are we scared of clowns?



Watch the creepy trailer for It with terrifying clown Pennywise



Getty

As the Mirror reported earlier this week , according to family counsellor Sarah Feuerbacher, clowns have been looked upon as scary long before people started dressing up and running around the woods.

Great.

Vulture repoted: "There is an aspect of horror that Freud initially called *the uncanny* .

"That's where something is familiar enough to be recognizable but weird enough to give you the shivers.

"Clowns, by definition, are supposed to make you laugh, but in the background is the fear that they won't, and all of us have that in the back of our mind: the fear that you won't actually be able to do the very thing that you're designed to do."

Clowns

Clowns approach schoolgirls Girl chased by clown Students hunt clowns 'Lurking' clown arrested 'Clown' lures kids into woods Clown's transphobic rant Paedo clown assaulted boy Clown groom stuns wedding

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Coffee 80 times stronger than espresso could keep you up for 18 hours

09:27, 7 Sep 2016 Updated 09:27, 7 Sep 2016 By Kirstie McCrum

mirror.co.uk

A coffee which claims to be 80 TIMES stronger than espresso is being sold by a cafe - but its inventor has warned that it could keep you up for 18 hours.

The 'A**kicker' is the brainchild of coffee fan and cafe owner Steve Benington, who says he first cooked up the electric brew for an accident and emergency nurse who was in need of a serious jolt.

The nurse drank the coffee at Viscous Coffee for two days, but Steve says they had to make some adjustments.

"We had to tone it down a bit because it kept her up for a total of three days," he reveals.

But since its launch, the coffee, which is intended to be drunk slowly over three to four hours, has become a hit - and Steve's made clear of the health issues, advertising it with a warning for those with high blood pressure or heart conditions.



Viscous Coffee

Viscous Coffee in Adelaide warns customers about the strength of its high-powered brew

"I have a quite detailed talk with people before they actually purchase one. If I can talk someone out of it, they're not ready for the drink," he told CNN .

Espresso coffee has on average 77mg of caffeine in a 44ml shot, and up to 400mg of caffeine a day appears to be safe for most healthy adults according to the Mayo Clinic .

Those who consume too much caffeine can be hit with jitters, restlessness and nervousness, as well as experiencing an uptick in heartbeats and sometime increased anxiety.

Insomnia also tends to accompany a caffeine binge.

Espresso coffee has on average 77mg of caffeine in a 44ml shot

"If you keep going, those symptoms will get worse. If you stay within the guidelines, you're fine," Steve advises.

The Asskicker experience will set you back $16 AUD - or about £11.94 - for a 16 ounce cup, or around 454ml.

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Coffins float down the street as Louisiana floods uproot caskets from graveyard

22:00, 15 Aug 2016 Updated 00:18, 16 Aug 2016 By Richard Ashmore

mirror.co.uk

"Worse than Hurricane Katrina": Coffins float down street as devastating Louisiana floods uproot caskets from graveyard



Caters

Coffins float eerily down a submerged road in Louisiana after severe flooding dislodged them from graveyards.

Coffins float eerily down a submerged road in Louisiana after severe flooding dislodged them from graveyards.

At least four people have died and more than 7,000 have been rescued after the American state was hit by up to 17 inches of rain in 24 hours.

The state, which was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, has been declared a major disaster zone by the US Government.

Anna Johnson, of Denham Springs, near state capital Baton Rouge, snapped the erie sight of caskets uprooted from the sodden soil floating down the road.

She said: “We’ve never seen anything like this. It’s worse than Hurricane Katrina.”

"My husband is on rescue missions right now. He has a boat and he's helping local sheriffs department."

Anna took several pictures around her neighbourhood showing roads and residential areas covered in flood water as well as her former high school. She also used her own drone to take aerial images of her neighbourhood inundated with flood waters.

It was reported as much as 11in of rain fell on Baton Rouge in just 24 hours, and as much as 17in elsewhere in the state in Livingston.

The Comite and Amite Rivers, near Baton Rouge and Denham Springs, were both predicted to reach record levels over the weekend.

The Acadian Thruway is covered in floodwater
A state of emergency has been declared in several parishes

State Governor John Bel Edwards announced that the federal government had declared a major disaster for the state of Louisiana.

He said: "I have traveled to affected areas and have seen the destruction caused by this unprecedented flooding.



Reuters



Reuters

"This is an ongoing event, and we are confident that every available state and federal resource will be brought to bear."

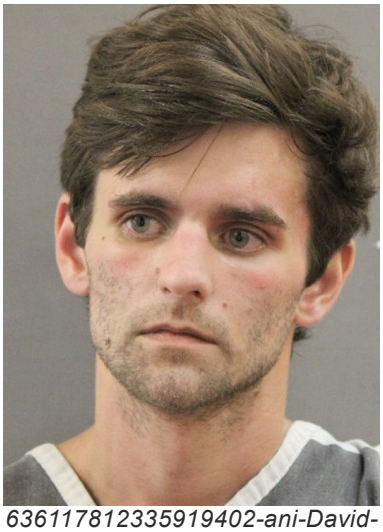
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Colfax man who asked deputy to arrest ghosts facing drug charges

Melissa Gregory , mgregory@thetowntalk.com, (318) 792-1807

thetowntalk.com



636117812335919402-ani-David-Brittain-Maxwell.JPG

David Brittain Maxwell(Photo: Courtesy/Grant Parish Sheriff's Office)

A Colfax man asked a Grant Parish Sheriff's deputy to arrest the ghosts inside his home after the man's suspicious behavior was reported, according to a release.

The sheriff's office had received a call about a man walking in his yard, wearing only a bath towel, carrying a large knife and talking to trees. Cpl. Blake Arrant went to the house in the 100 block of Lemoine Cutoff Road to find David Brittain Maxwell, 26, on his front porch.

Maxwell told Arrant "that there were people in the tops of the trees and ghosts inside of his house," reads the release. "After further investigation, Corporal Arrant determined that the man was under the influence of drugs, and drugs were found inside of the home."

Maxwell was arrested and charged with possession of crystal meth, possession of suboxone and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Read or Share this story: http://www.thetowntalk.com/story/news/2016/10/11/colfax-man-who-asked-deputy-arrest-ghosts-facing-drug-charges/91892732/

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College student has Kit-Kat stolen, company sends 6,500 more

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressNovember 8, 2016

Asso
Pres



In this Nov. 3, 2016, photo Hunter Jobbins, freshman at Kansas State University, poses in his car filled with nearly 6,500 Kit Kat bars in Manhattan, Kansas. Jobbins told The Wichita Eagle he left his car unlocked with a Kit Kat in the cupholder last month before running into his dorm building. When he came back, the candy bar had been replaced with a note. The thief wrote, “I love Kit Kats so I checked your door and it was unlocked. Did not take anything other than the Kit Kat. I am sorry and hungry.” Jobbins’ picture of the note went viral on Twitter and Hershey responded by sending a representative to the campus with 6,500 Kit Kat bars. (Colin E. Braley/AP Images for The Hershey Company)

MANHATTAN, Kan. (AP) -- Hershey has come to the rescue of a college student who had his Kit Kat bar brazenly stolen.

Kansas State University student Hunter Jobbins tells The Wichita Eagle he left his car unlocked with a Kit Kat in the cup holder last month before running into his dorm building. When he came back, the candy bar had been replaced with a note. The thief wrote, "I love Kit Kats so I checked your door and it was unlocked. Did not take anything other than the Kit Kat. I am sorry and hungry."

Jobbins' picture of the note went viral on Twitter, and Hershey responded by sending a representative to the campus with 6,500 Kit Kat bars.

Jobbins stuffed the bars in his car and handed them out around campus last week.

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Collinwood School Fire | Cleveland Historical

clevelandhistorical.org

Cleveland Historical

Collinwood School Fire

By Heidi Fearing

On 4 March 1908, a tragedy occurred that prompted changes in school safety across the United States. About nine o'clock in the morning on March 4, 1908, nine-year-old Niles Thompson jumped out of a window at Lakeview Elementary to escape a fire that had started in the basement of his school. Nearly two hundred children who had also been lucky enough to escape watched as flames engulfed the Collinwood school. Niles frantically ran among his schoolmates, searching for his little brother, Thomas. Once Niles realized his brother was not one of the safe children, he ran back into the school to save Thomas. Neither of the two Thompson boys walked out of their school again.

Niles and Thomas Thompson were among the 172 children and two teachers who were trapped inside the school and died in the fire. Nineteen of these children could not be identified. That weekend, the entire Collinwood community mourned for those lost. According to Cleveland's Plain Dealer, "The village seemed to be one vast procession of hearses and carriages. . . . Scarcely did one funeral carriage pass before another came into sight wending its way with its sorrowful burden to the burying grounds. . . . Those who had no dead to mourn stood on the streets watching the grim procession as they passed. There was scarcely a dry eye in Collinwood." The following Monday, memorial and funeral services were held at Lake View Cemetery for all the victims of the Collinwood school fire. Businesses in the Collinwood neighborhood were closed for the day out of respect for the dead and their families. Lakeview Elementary children that survived served as pallbearers and other Cleveland school children made memorials in the shape of flowers.

A number of building deficiencies contributed to the fire's start and to so many children getting trapped inside the blazing building. According to the State Deputy Fire Marshal, who investigated the burnt building, the fire began when an overheated furnace ignited exposed dry wood in the boiler room. Obstruction of a clear pathway to the exits, narrow stairs, and the school's highly flammable structure were blamed for the fire and consequent deaths of so many children. This "awakened the state to action for better protection against fire in schools and public buildings." Following the Lakeview school fire, many changes were made in school building in Cleveland and throughout the country. For the former, these changes included iron stair cases, concrete floors, fireproof coverings for pipes, the placement of doors directly in front of stair cases, and unobstructed doorways. Everywhere in the United States, laws were passed that required enclosed stairwells and special door latches.

Lakeview Elementary School

Lakeview Elementary School stood on E. 152nd Street in Collinwood. Before it burned down 366 children attended the school. Less than 200 survived the fire. Image Courtesy of Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.View File Details Page



Lakeview Elementary School


Firemen Delayed

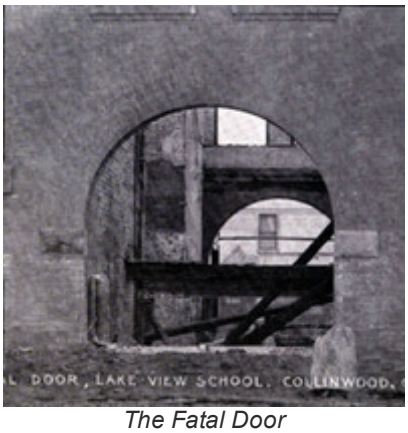
Firemen Delayed

On the morning of the fire that destroyed Lakeview Elementary, firemen were delayed in getting to the school. The horses that were needed to pull the gasoline fire engine had to be gathered from the fields. When the firemen got to the scene, they realized their ladders were not long enough to reach the second story, and their hoses were leaky, making it difficult to extinguish the flames that traveled from the basement to the top of the school. Finally, they had forgotten their ax and could not break down the back entrance where many of the children were found to have burned to death. Image Courtesy of Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.View File Details Page


After the Fire

After the Fire

Once the flames were extinguished, children were pulled from the gutted school building. Parents had to scan the line of tiny corpses to find their missing children. Image Courtesy of Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.View File Details Page



The Fatal Door

The Fatal Door

At first it was thought that the students could not get out of the school because the doors opened from the inside. Although this was not the case, the two back doors were narrowed, and only one could open, allowing only a little over two feet for escape. The vestibule that led to the back door had been made into a cloak room, with hooks protruding from the walls on which coats were hung. Finally, there were partitions built in front of the doors, blocking a direct path to the outside. Image Courtesy of Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.View File Details Page



White Caskets of the Unidentified

The unidentified children were buried in a mass grave at Lake View Cemetery. Each of the unidentified were buried separately with a marker bearing a number. The number corresponds to some description of what was found on the bodies, such as a ring or piece of cloth, and is recorded in a registry. On 22 October 1910, the memorial for the unknown dead of the Collinwood fire was dedicated at the cemetery. On the opposite side of the memorial's shaft is a bronze tablet that has all of the names of the teachers and children who died.

White Caskets of the Unidentified Image Courtesy of Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.View File Details Page



Memorial School

Memorial School

Despite the grief surrounding this tragedy, it was acknowledged that another school had to be built to teach the current and future Collinwood children. Parents were against the rebuilding of the Lakeview school on the old site, but eventually compromised with the planners of the new Memorial Elementary School. It was decided that it would be built on the same site, but not the same foundation. The school still stands today. Image Courtesy of Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.View File Details Page



Memorial Garden

Memorial Garden

Two years after the fire, a memorial park, featuring gardens, fountains and gravel walkways was built on the site of the old Collinwood School, right next to Memorial Elementary. Beautiful flowers still bloom in the gardens today. Image Courtesy of Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.View File Details Page

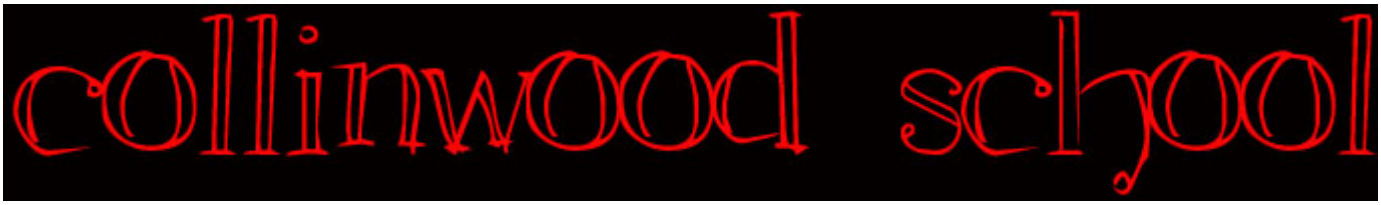
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Collinwood School Fire

deadohio.com



On Ash Wednesday, March 4, 1908, Collinwood's Lake View

Elementary School became the site of the country's worst school tragedy. Shortly after 9:00 a.m., and while school was in session, overheated steam pipes ignited nearby wood joists. The fire spread quickly, and roughly half of the students were unable to escape. In the end, 172 children, 2 teachers and 1 rescuer perished in the fire.

Initially, it was believed that the students were unable to escape because the doors opened inward. This later proved to be in error--the children died partly as a result of their own panic. They rushed the doors, which soon jammed with the bodies of those trying so desperately to get out. Some teachers who could not get their classes to the crowded exits led the children out through the second and third floor windows.

Collinwood at that time was a small community of roughly 8,000 citizens, and many families lived near the school. When word of the fire spread through the neighborhood, hysterical parents rushed to the scene to find and rescue their children. Some tried to pull the children out of the doorways, or stood below the upper windows in an attempt to catch the jumpers. Sadly, most of their efforts proved futile, and they were left to watch helplessly as the fire consumed the entire building.

The bodies of 19 students could not be identified. The city of Collinwood purchased a common grave at Lake View Cemetery for the unclaimed children.

Although devastating, some good came out of this tragedy. It enhanced public awareness of fire safety and prevention, resulting in improved building and fire codes, as well as the nationwide practice of fire drills.

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In 1910, a new school was constructed directly next to the site of Lake View Elementary School. The new school was named Collinwood Memorial. Next door, and on top of the site of the old school, a Memorial Garden was built. According to John Stark Bellamy II, in his book "The Maniac in the Bushes and More Tales of Cleveland Woe," some grieving parents protested this action. One mother, for instance, did not want her child to go to a school where, presumably, the ashes of his brother lay next door.

Collinwood Memorial School eventually shut down in the 1970's and has been abandoned ever since.

During the 20+ years that the school has stood vacant, it has acquired quite a reputation for hauntings and other weird activity. Some neighbors say that they have seen a light that will first appear in a second floor window, and then travel along the halls of the school before disappearing. One reader reports that those brave enough to venture inside the old building at night will experience sudden chills and hear the faint screams of children.

Even during the day when we visited the site, it was apparent that the neighborhood has become pretty rough, so we won't test that particular legend and will instead leave it to the imagination and sensibility of the reader.

Below are some photographs of the school as it appears today.



A view of the right side entrance.



Another view of the left entrance, toward the back.







The front walkway leading to the Memorial Garden, and the original site of the disaster.

Below, a side view of the memorial. The tiles are inscribed with the names of those who perished in the fire.



A close-up of the new memorial plaque erected shortly after a rededication ceremony in May 2003.



The grounds behind the memorial.



Some may wonder why the Collinwood Memorial school has stood vacant for so long. Apparently, the reasons are less mysterious, and have more to do with disagreement over what to do with the building. Some plans had called for reopening the school, others for use as a community center or apartment building. Most recently, plans have been presented by Northeast Shores Development Corp. ("NSDC") to raze the building and redevelop the property for construction of single family homes. This has been met with some opposition, especially by those who wish to preserve the school. It is interesting to note that NSDC sponsored the rededication of the memorial garden,

perhaps as a way to appease those who are concerned with preserving the integrity of this historic site.



UPDATES

3/14/04:

The Memorial school is being demolished to make way for construction of yet another new school on the site of one of this country's worst school disasters. Demolition began March 12th, 2004. Fortunately, the Memorial Gardens next door to the site will be preserved. For more information, check out the Cleveland Municipal Schools news article by clicking here. Many thanks to Marguerite for providing the information.



RESOURCES

Sun Newspaper

Links on the Memorial school:

"New State Marker Honors Lakeview Fire Victims" 5/22/03

"Tragic Past Leads to Present Lessons" 10/18/01

"Reaction to Proposal is Mixed" 10/28/99

"School Could be Razed for Homes" 10/28/99

To read more about the Collinwood school fire disaster, including heart-wrenching eyewitness accounts, check out the book The Maniac in the Bushes and More Tales of Cleveland Woe by John Stark Bellamy II.

CSU maintains an extensive archive of newspapers, postcards, photographs and other historical materials, and is an excellent source for anyone researching Cleveland/Northeast Ohio history. For more information, or to simply explore the archives, we strongly encourage you to visit their website by clicking here.

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How man got parking fine waived stuff.co.nz

stuff Dunedin man pens colourful letter to council, gets off parking ticket

Last updated 12:05, September 24 2016



LIBBY WILSON/FAIRFAX NZ A Dunedin man got creative in his effort to get off a $40 parking ticket.

I see only two ways forward. One path leads to a safe mankind with my faith in the Dunedin City Council, machines, and humanity restored. The other path leads to a dark and uncertain future where I pay my parking ticket and have to start forming a resistance to the inevitable robot revolution with reduced resources. Please, for the sake of our species, excuse my parking ticket.

I hope this letter finds you well. Our future lies in your hands.

J N

Road

Dunedin

Josh Nicolson was having a bad day. He circled Moray Pl in central Dunedin over and over again looking for a park, but none was forthcoming.

Finally, the parking gods looked kindly on him and a space appeared. He didn't even need to parallel park.

Then, though, things turned bad again. Not one, but two nearby pay and display machines were faulty. Nicolson decided to risk it. Bad choice. The parking warden found him.

That's when Nicolson got creative, penning a colourful 750-word missive to the Dunedin City Council about his plight, pleading to be let off his $40 ticket.

READ MORE:
*** Confessions of a parking warden**
*** Pilot writes notes to excuse students' lateness**
*** The weirdest parking fine dispute in Perth, Australia**
*** Bruce Springsteen writes note so pupil can see his show**

"I have recently had my faith in society shaken to its very core and have some grave concerns for the future of mankind," he began, perhaps overdoing it a bit.

"I was visiting central Dunedin on the sixth of September. I circled Moray Place, the Octagon and some of the surrounding streets hunting for park like an Australian rugby team looking for a trophy (slowly and blaming the rest of the world for my issues)."

Upon parking, his bad luck continued: "The credit card slot was taped over with a sticker that may as well have said "All hope is lost".

"I am aware that you offer a 'Txt-a-park' option but alas my phone had as much charge as a rhinoceros on rollerblades.

"This was not the end of my misfortune as the shrapnel pocket of my wallet was as empty as my heart had just become."

When the next-closest pay and display machine also resisted taking his money, Nicolson's prose went next-level: "My inability to pay was due to the fact that your machine failed me. Your machine has also failed you in its blatant disregard for revenue gathering.



Dear J N

INFRINGEMENT NOTICE: P

Thank you for contacting us regarding the above infringement, issued on 6 September 2016.

Your explanation has been accepted and you will not be required to make payment.

Yours sincerely

S Morgan
CUSTOMER SERVICES AGENCY

FACEBOOK The council seemed to agree.

"I fear that if left unaddressed this may be the beginning of the machine revolution promised by the prophetic films of James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"I fear that if this spreads to other machines it is only a matter of time before the missile armed drones join the mayhem."

He concluded with a request to have his parking ticket excused, if only to avoid having to "start forming a resistance to the inevitable robot revolution".

He signed off: "I hope this letter finds you well. Our future lies in your hands."

The council seemed to agree. Although "S Morgan" of the customer services agency was less inclined to his sci-fi apocalypse prophesying.

"Thank you for contacting us regarding the above infringement," they started.

"Your explanation has been accepted and you will not be required to make a payment."

Nicolson said he did not know what inspired him to write the letter the way he did.

"It just kind of happened really. I started writing and it kind of got away from me."

The Dunedin teacher aide said he thought a formal letter probably would not have had the same success.

"Really I should've had cash and other ways of paying but, I mean, I didn't get much of a response from the [council] so it's hard to know.

"I'm considering writing a follow-up because they haven't really addressed my concerns."

He said he hoped the council saw the funny side of his letter.

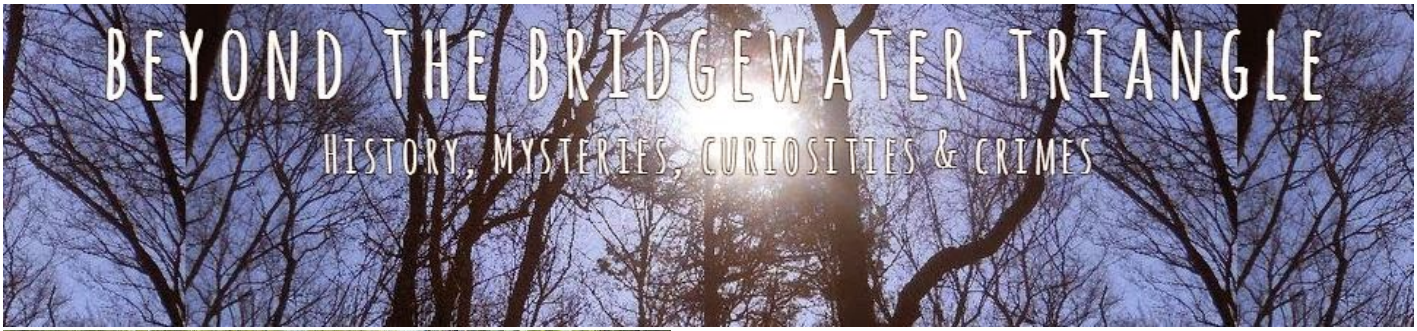
"I don't think I probably should've got off. I think without it being funny it probably wouldn't have been quite as successful."

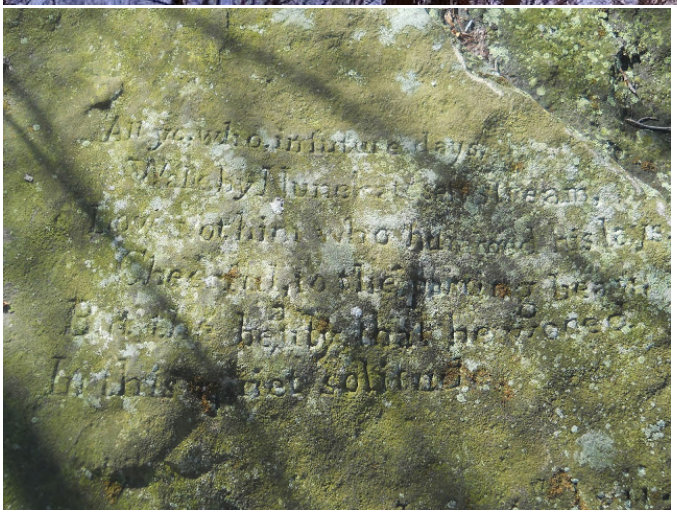
- Stuff

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Comfort Bridge & The Solitude Stone

thebridgewatertriangle.com





The Solitude Stone lay undiscovered for 80 years...until a local girl went missing after one fateful canoe trip in West Bridgewater in the summer of 1916. If Evelyn Packard hadn't mysteriously died, her body not found for days, the Solitude Stone might never had been discovered at all.
1916. A missing girl vanishes from a canoe on the Town River in West Bridgewater within a half hour after she rents her canoe. The canoe is found shortly after with no clues as to her whereabouts. Her coat and a pillow are found inside the canoe "bone dry."

One headline read: "Doctors Fear Girl is Crazed in Hockomock Swamp." After combing the woods for days and finding no clues as to her whereabouts, foul play is suspected. During one of grueling searches of the woods of the swamp, a local reporter decides to take a break and sits down on nearby Comfort Bridge, a bridge that at the time was made out of three immense ancient stones. Up until of August of 1916, no one had noticed that there was something very special about this particular stone. Hidden under 80 years of dirt and moss, was the stone that would become known as the "Solitude Stone." It would take some time to uncover the mysterious author of the words inscribed on it. And that person would turn out to be the leading Egyptologist of the day, called upon worldwide to decipher hieroglyphics. He wrote the book "The Temple of Solomon" and followed the teachings of an occultist mystic.
Only in the Bridgewater Triangle, right?
The Solitude Stone might possibly be the BIGGEST clue in the mystery of the Bridgewater Triangle. Let me start at the beginning. “Pretty” Evelyn Packard--as local papers called her--had taken the trolley from her Brockton home to The Americanage Club on South Street on August 4, 1916. There on one beautiful, sunny Wednesday morning, she rented a canoe and began a journey to which she would never return. Soon after Packard began her paddle “into oblivion” down Town River, two local boys found her canoe floating empty in a lagoon. The authorities were stunned. If she had fallen into the water from her canoe, surely there would be water on the interior to indicate a splash. But there


MISSING BROCKTON GIRL

MISS EVELYN PACKARD,
For Whom Search Is Being Made at West Bridgewater.

was none. The canoe was bone dry. Area doctors speculated that Packard had wandered into Hockomock Swamp and had become "crazed by her experiences." The townspeople dragged the river, despite the suspicion that the girl was lost in the swamp, but produced no evidence to solve the mystery of her disappearance. The day after Packard disappeared, one local newspaper reported, "The mystery remains as deep as ever and that there remains one explanation: That the young woman was the victim of foul play. Miss Packard's own family scout the theory of her being enticed into one of the several cottages along the river bank and being held prisoner. In other words, the disappearance of the really beautiful and shapely 27-year old Brockton girl is as profound a mystery tonight as it was on Wednesday afternoon, when the canvas-covered canoe, which had been hired earlier in the day at the Americanage Canoe Club, was found drifting, right side up, and with the interior and the contests as dry as a chip, by two boys."


SEARCHING FOR MISS PACKARD

Mystery Deepens at West Bridgewater

Young Woman May Be Lying Ill or Dead in Woods

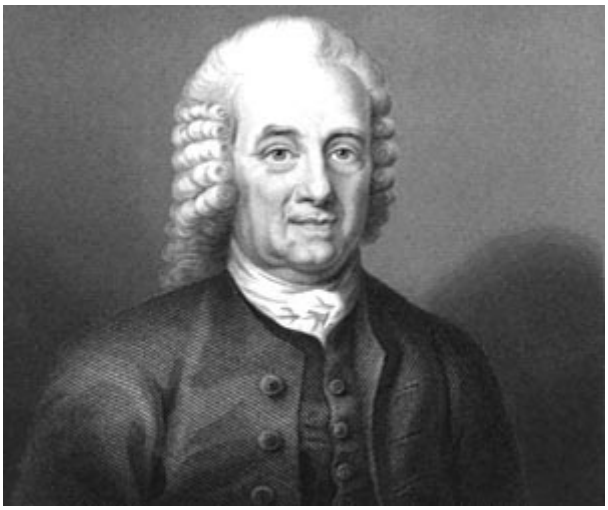
Special Dispatch to the Globe
WEST BRIDGEWATER, Aug 4—Search was this morning renewed for Miss Evelyn E. Packard, daughter of John D. Packard of Brockton, who so

Continued on the Second Page.

Packard's body was found under Skim Milk Bridge (two bridges down the river from Comfort on the Town River) three days after she first went missing. During the search for her body, while searchers were still combing the river, a local newspaper reporter found something curious in the woods. A peculiar stone with an inscription on it...in the middle of nowhere. 1900s Bridgewater Historian Edgar Howard wrote of the incident: "While sitting upon the bridge, resting after a day of arduous searching for the girl, the writer's attention was arrested by an inscription chiseled upon the flat stone forming the south side of the bridge. The stone is of an oblong shape and perhaps five or six feet across. Curiosity was aroused and an attempt was made to decipher the ancient inscription, which comprised of six lines extending across the face of the stone, and which had been almost been obliterated by time and the elements, and it was only by clearing away the tangled vines and filling the letters."

Poem Inscribed on the Solitude Stone:

All ye, who in future days,
Walk by Nunckatessett stream
Love not him who hummed his lay
Cheerful to the parting beam,
But the Beauty that he wooed.



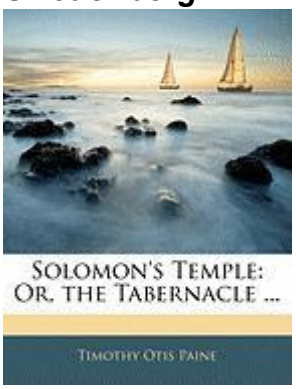
Emmanual Swedonborg

As to who the author and inscriber of the solitude stone was, it was a mystery. Why would someone take the time to inscribe these words onto a stone where no one would find it? Edgar Howard made it his mission to discover who the poet and inscriber were who had carved the lines into to the ancient rock. “The beauty of the scene may well have inspired the lines. To the south stretches Eagles Nest Meadows toward the Hockomock, with the winding Nunckatessett and the woods beyond. At the bridge the stream makes a sharp turn to the right before it reaches the Pine Hill ridge, crowned by whispering pines, flowing under the old bridge, with its riot of vines and almost hiding it from view.”

It was Howard who figured out it was Timothy Otis Paine who left his mark in the solitude of the woods so long ago. REVEREND Timothy Otis Paine. Reverend Timothy Otis Paine of the New Church of Jeruselum. Never heard of The New Church? It is a religion based on Christianity and the teachings of the occultist Emanuel Swedenborg and largely based on principles of the Age of Aquarius. From Swedonborg's teachings came the Rite of Swedonborg or the Swedonborg Rite, a fraternity that paralled freemasonry.

"A detailed discussion of those ideas, and of Swedenborgian theology in general is beyond the scope of this paper but certain aspects must be noted in order to make sense of the Swedenborgian Rite. For Swedenborg the physical world is the result of spiritual causes, and the laws of nature are reflections of spiritual laws; thus objects and even the material world are images of their spiritual counterparts. This is his doctrine of 'correspondences'. From this derives the other notion that concerns us: the idea behind the literal, historical meaning of the scriptures is an inner, spiritual sense — which sense is drawn out for all to see in Swedenborg’s expository works. And it was a fascination with those expository works that led to the first creation of a masonic Rite of Swedenborg."

"Swedenborg had an influence upon Freemasonry, albeit unknown to himself...'it was the Freemasons of the advanced degrees who borrowed from Swedenborg, and not Swedenborg from them." Out of the teachings of Swedonborg came the "Swedonborg Rite" or the "Rite of Swedonborg."



Was Timothy Otis Paine a member of this rite? My guess would be yes. Because Paine was not your average reverend/poet. He was also the LEADING Egyptologist of the day--the "go to" person for deciphering heiroglyphics. Paine was an interesting man. Theologian, archaeologist, Egyptologist, reverend, poet and historian. To say that Timothy Otis Paine was man of mystery would certainly be an understatement. To say that he was accomplished would be a disservice to all that he did. Two of his most interesting accomplishments are his book "Solomon's Temple" and his translation of the Egyptian "Book of The Dead." Two subjects of vital interest to brothers of freemasonry.

"*According to Masonic historians, Freemasonry is based on the principles and values of ancient Egypt. The most important principle of the Freemasons that is traced to ancient Egypt is the belief in materialist evolution. This theory of evolution is based on the belief that the universe exists by and of itself, evolving only by chance. In this theory of evolution, matter was always extant, and the world originated when order arose from chaos. This state of chaos was referred to as Nun. A latent, creative force exists within this state of disorder which has the potential to rise above the disorder. Another philosophical connection established between the ancient Egyptians and the Freemasons is believed to be the common rituals associated with death and burial practices. Specifically, the link between ancient Egypt and the Masons can be found in the text known as The Book of the Dead.*

This text's original title is in fact The Book of Coming Forth by Day. It is an ancient Egyptian funerary text that outlines instructions for the afterlife."

Curiously, there is a photo at the West Bridgewater Library of the Solitude Stone. Whoever owned the photo had inscribed in the left-hand corner the name of the locally famous local landmark But curiously the former owner did not write "The Solitude Stone" in firm black ink. Instead the photo was inscribed with the name "The Suicide Stone." It is unknown how many suicides it took for the Solitude Stone to earn its grisly nickname, but in 1880, a heartbroken young man by the name of John Crane shot himself in the head near it in 1880. " The bridge had "a reputation for suicide." But at this time I have yet to figure out what suicides happened on the bridge.

In 1970, the West Bridgewater Conservation Commission moved the Solitude Stone to a safer place not far from its original spot during road construction. The old rock Comfort Bridge was dismantled and another bridge was built out of wood not far from the location of the Solitude Stone. The stone is located on Forest Street, on the left, just before the wooden bridge.

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World's first commercially available jetpack is now on sale

06:03 EST, 11 November 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- **JetPack Aviation's JB-10 is now selling to an exclusive group of customers**
- **The Bond-style gadget is the world's first commercially available jetpack**
- **Last month the company behind it set up a crowdfunding campaign**
- **So far it has raised just over a tenth of its £300,000 ($379,000) target**

By Abigail Beall For Mailonline

It is the ultimate toy that will allow people to relive their James Bond fantasies in real life.

Now JetPack Aviation has announced that the world's first commercially available jetpack is on sale to 'well qualified buyers'.

If you think that rules you out of trying it, there might be hope still - the company is also running competition to give someone a change to fly one for themselves.

Scroll down for video



It is the ultimate boy's toy and will allow people to relive their James Bond fantasies in real life. The world's first commercially available jetpack is now on sale, to 'well qualified buyers'

HOW THE JB-10 WORKS

The JB-10 JetPack uses two minature jet engines fixed to a harness.

The engines run on aviation fuel and can together lift 350lbs at a time.

It can be controlled using two joysticks which control the lift and direction of the jetpack.

According to New Atlas, the devices are now on sale and expected to start shipping in April or May 2017.

The man behind the technology flew his personal prototype over London in October.

David Mayman, a former commercial pilot from Australia, worked with a team of engineers to build the one-person vertical take-off device.

In a four minute flight he flew around 100 feet (30 metres) into the air above the River Thames in East London, zipping back and forth towards the ExCel conference centre.

Together with chief designer Nelson Tyler, he has launched a company called JetPack Aviation that is aiming to sell the jetpacks to the public, and is running a competition for people to have a chance to fly one themselves.

The company also claims to have an agreement to develop a special heavy lifting version for US Special Forces.

According to New Atlas , the devices are now on sale and are expected to start shipping in April or May 2017

The JB-10 JetPack is powered by two miniature jet engines run on aviation fuel that sit either side of a harness and can be controlled using two joysticks.

Mr Mayman and his team has so far raised over £36,000 ($45,500) out of a £300,000 ($379,000) target in a crowdfunding campaign that was launched at the start of last month.

This money will help them create an electric version of the jetpack, which they hope to sell from around $250,000 (£196,000) each.

Speaking after his flight over the Thames in October, Mr Mayman described the experience as 'awesome' and said it was the ultimate 'freedom'.

'A lot of us spent time in our youth fantasising about what it would be like to follow Buck Rogers up into the air with our very own jetpacks,' he said at the time.

Former airline pilot David Mayman took to the air above the River Thames in London (pictured) lsat monght to mark the launch of a crowdfunding campaign to develop a commercially available jetpacks

Former airline pilot David Mayman took to the air above the River Thames in London (pictured) lsat monght to mark the launch of a crowdfunding campaign to develop a commercially available jetpacks

During the four minute flight (pictured) he zipped back and forth across the river towards the ExCel conference center

Mr Mayman looked like a real-life James Bond as he soared above the River Thames in east London (pictured left). During the four minute flight (pictured right) he zipped back and forth across the river towards the ExCel conference center

The jetpack (pictured) is small enough to be so it can fit inside the boot of a car and can be carried by just one person

Mr Mayman said he had spent many hours dreaming of soaring around like Buck Rogers in his own personal jetpack so it was a dream come true to finally pilot one in real life (pictured)

The jet engines run on aviation fuel, but Mr Mayman's company JetPack Aviation hopes to now develop an electric version

The jetpack has been compared to the one used by Sean Connery as James Bond in the film Thunderball (pictured)

TEST FLIGHT IN MONACO

The JB-10 is the latest iteration of personal jet packs from JetPack Aviation.

The pack itself is lightweight enough to be carried by a single person and can reportedly fly for up to 10 minutes and reach speeds of 60 mph (96 kph).

Mounted to each side is a small engine that provides upward thrust. The JB-10 uses twin turbo jets which have been specially adapted, reducing the size compared to turbofans, which run cooler and consume less fuel.

Its inventors says it is 'inherently stable but also capable of very dynamic manoeuvres thanks to our approach to engine vectoring'.

The JB-9 used a carbon-fibre corset that straps to the pilot's back, with the majority of the 'backpack' section carrying fuel.

'We are getting a lot closer to launching a commercial product but there is still much further that we can take our design and ideas.'

The team are also hoping to popularise a new sport of jetpack races with their technology.

The jetpack is currently able to lift around 350lbs and can reach speeds of up to 60mph. It can also be packed down small enough to be carried by one person.

The jetpack (pictured over the Thames) has a top speed of around 60mph and has a flight time of around 10 mintues

The developers claim the JB-10 JetPack (pictured) can have a range of applications and uses but they believe it may appeal to those hoping to live out their James Bond fantasies

The jetpack is highly maneuverable (pictured) but currently only has a limited flight time. It means that anyone hoping to commute to the office with it would need to live nearby

It uses twin turbo jets which have been specially adapted, reducing the size compared to turbofans, which run cooler and consume less fuel.

The company claim they also have a research and development agreement in place with the US Special Operations Command to develop a four turbine jetpack capable of lifting 700lbs.

Lucy Sharp, from Seedrs Investment, the firm behind the crowdfunding campaign for the electric jetpack, said: 'This is for the city boys who grew up in the 70s and 80s and dreamt of being a real-life Iron Man.

The team claim they are developing a heavy lift version of the jetpack for the US special forces. The current jetpack has two engines and can lift 350lbs while the US military version will have four engines and lift 700lbs

Mr Mayman's flight in London (pictured) last month marked the launch of a crowdfunding campaign to develop a commercial version of the technology. Onlookers were startled as he flew overhead

The jetpacks (pictured) are expected to retail for around $250,000 (£196,000) each - about the same as an Aston Martin car

The team are also hoping to develop a new sport - jetpack racing when the technology (pictured) becomes more widely available

'It retails at around the price of an Aston Martin and it is the ultimate boy's toy. It'll be a choice - either Aston Martin or jetpack to work today?'

Mr Mayman has now conducted more than 400 test flights in his personal jetpack, including around the Statue of Liberty and in Monoco.

Comments (52)

Safe Flying Guru, Manchester, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

I bet the Government's getting ready to introduce licences and no fly zones. Money to be made.

BlueinCebu, Halintagaan Island, Japan, about 16 hours ago

Wait till the drug dealers in Manchester get hold of them!

I miss old England, Jalapa, United States, about 17 hours ago

Leaf blowers for only $100.00 and no altitude sickness.

Mab Gom, Brasilia, Brazil, about 19 hours ago

The Martin jetpack has been tested longer and has a good safety record. This one looks like a rush job to the market.

BlueinCebu, Halintagaan Island, Japan, about 16 hours ago

That's the GDP for a year in New Zealand isn't it?

Paula L, Dunedin, New Zealand, about 16 hours ago

The Martin Jetpack looks a hell of a lot safer than this one!

freetothink, North Staffs, about 19 hours ago

The James bond version was a rocket pack not a jet pack. This looks like two large radio control jet turbine units on a frame.

freetothink, North Staffs, about 19 hours ago

The James bond version was a rocket pack not a jet pack. This looks like two large radio control jet turbine units on a frame.

mdsdriver3, exeter, about 20 hours ago

It looks too dangerous to fart.

MallyBoy, VICTORIA., Australia, about 20 hours ago

I would not want anyone flying one of these to be overhead anywhere near me. If your car engine stops you can pull into a curb and walk away. One of these at 100 feet?

Feddup, Yorkshire, United Kingdom, about 4 hours ago

Their problem, not yours (unless he falls on you).

Robert, Sussex, United Kingdom, about 20 hours ago

be great for delivering Drugs and Mobile phones over prison walls with

Greggy_b, Cirencester, United Kingdom, about 21 hours ago

oh, qualified ?? just another way to be oppressed cus of youre status

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American Conspiracy theorist and pseudoscience proponent may be attempting to circumvent Peruvian authorities to desecrate human remains | A Hot Cup of Joe

ahotcupofjoe.net

http://ahotcupofjoe.net/2016/09/american-conspiracy-theorist-and-pseudoscience-proponent-may-be-attempting-to-circumvent-peruvian-authorities-to-desecrate-human-remains/

A Hot Cup of Joe



Pseudoarchaeology

American Conspiracy theorist and pseudoscience proponent may be attempting to circumvent Peruvian authorities to desecrate human remains

September 5, 2016 Carl Feagans 7 Comments



Screen capture of Twitter. The photo depicts a woman holding a deformed skull looted from a Peruvian cemetery.

Today, conspiracy theorist and pseudoscience proponent J. Hutton Pulitzer “tweeted” a photo of a woman holding a human skull while standing in what appears to be the Huaura Valley in Peru. Near the town of Acaray is an archaeological complex and a vast Peruvian cemetery that has been repeatedly looted over the years.

Peruvian law forbids the looting, of course. But like most heritage laws in most countries, enforcement is likely the difficult part. Behind the woman, you can see the pitted landscape of a cemetery where looters probe the ground with steel rods in search of voids. Once one is found, they shovel the ground, removing grave goods and body parts for sale on the antiquities market, leaving behind a scarred landscape where once was a solemn cemetery for the dead.

This particular site has been looted heavily since at least 2002 and you can see the damage from space!



Click to see the full size. The small dots are looter pits probably within about a mile of the woman in the photo above.

The photo shows a woman holding what appears to be skull shaped using a fronto-occipital method which would have compression applied to the forehead as well as the back of the skull and perhaps even the top. All before 3 years of age, since this is when cranial malleability generally ends. It is difficult to say what type of deformation was used since there's only a frontal plane of the skull shown. Also, the woman is holding the skull with her forearms outstretched much in the way one holds a small fish so that it appears as a lunker.

Among his several tweets, Pulitzer reveals that there are "200 of these found at the same time"–they call such an occurrence a cemetery–and wants someone who dared question his judgment to "explain" it. Apparently he's never heard of the practice of skull deformation in ancient Peru, but the disturbing part is that he and Scott Wolter, another pseudoscience proponent and conspiracy theorist, want "access" to the remains.

Elongated and shaped skulls are the sort of thing that appeal to the "ancient aliens" crowd, perhaps understandably since they look so different from normal skulls. But the practice of skull deformation and the bioarchaeological, pathological, and anatomical considerations are so thoroughly investigated and understood that the only good reason for two would-be media personalities to make a big deal of it is attention.

These two would like "access" to these human remains, buried by their families hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years ago so that they can run DNA tests.

There are several problems with this, not the least of which is that their desires are unethical and very likely part of the reason why skulls and mummies are being desecrated and looted along with their grave goods every day in Peru. Another problem is that in order for them to do so, they would need permits. And the permitting process in Peru is designed *specifically* to prevent amateurs, looters, and self-serving troublemakers from removing cultural items from Peru or even disturbing them to begin with. In order to obtain permits, they would have to be Registered Professional Archaeologists as well as agree to publish their findings professionally and in Spanish.

Of course, this is the kind of thing that Pulitzer could immediately respond to with, "but how do you know we didn't *hire* an archaeologist?" To which I'd gladly eat humble pie if he'd only name the archaeologist. No professional archaeologist that would be qualified to do ground-disturbing research in Peru would be dumb enough to get involved with these guys. Not because the study of ancient Peruvians isn't worthy. But because they appear to have little actual regard for indigenous cultures. They'd like to look for DNA probably because it's something science-like that sounds real good on CSI TV shows, and they assume the public really knows little about it but trusts it all the same… and they can manipulate to their whim. They could make grand claims about DNA results then never show the actual work up from the lab, account for the sampling methods, or reveal the name of the lab used (because they'll never, ever use a lab that specializes in ancient DNA that has strict testing protocols).

But all this is irrelevant. Since to test DNA, they would have to have a set of samples. those samples would have to be obtained from a specimen using strict protocols (breaking drill bits off in a skull won't cut it). And that means actually damaging human remains that are controlled by the INC

in Peru. Assuming they get the permission to examine then do minimal destruction to retrieve a sample, they'll then have to get permission to send that cultural material to a lab specializing in ancient DNA. And that part ain't easy. The INC is going to want to know the full provenience of the specimen, the precise, professional methods that will be used, and that the collector is fully qualified and experienced.

I somehow think that the woman in the photograph is not going to vouch for the skull she looted to the INC in Peru. So for Hutton and Wolter to "access" it, they'll have to circumvent the Peruvian authorities.

Or maybe they won't.



Photo by Margaret at http://huaqueando.blogspot.com/ This shows, up-close, the devastation brought on by looters who look for grave goods, skulls, and mummies at Peruvian sites. Demand from pseudoscience proponents for skulls they find "anomalous" doesn't help matters.

Edit [9/5/2016]:
The woman in the photo apparently stated that it was taken at a cemetery known as Sigual and was posted to her own social media account. I'm not sure if that's in the Acaray vicinity, but the photos are consistent with others taken at this ancient site. The farmland on the left; the power-line tower on the right; etc. She mentions the intent to obtain DNA of the skull, but her comments in the same social media post indicate she believes it to be an "alien" skull. And by alien, she doesn't mean "not of Peru" rather "not of this world." Other comments and groups she's associated with show she's into UFO and alien explanations.

There's no mention of who will sample the skull, what sampling methods would be used, or what laboratory would do the DNA testing. Most likely, it'll be sent off to a "learn your ancestry" lab that doesn't specialize in ancient DNA collection and there will be errors that get misinterpreted. If it's tested at all.

My analysis of the photo was apparently spot on. Here's another photo, side-by-side, of the same skull–not held at arm's length.



Two views of the same skull found on social media. Not quite the fish story it was made out to be on the left, eh?

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Cookie Monster sparks debate by wearing a poppy on The One Show

What a muppet.



BBC

BY BEA MITCHELL 8 NOVEMBER 2016

Sesame Street's Cookie Monster went and wore a remembrance poppy on *The One Show* and he's sparked a nationwide debate about it - and most likely hasn't a clue, because he's a muppet.

Since his appearance, the BBC has been accused of of taking things too far by some viewers, while others have praised the company for their respect.

However, we're mainly concerned about the lovely, greedy blue puppet's wellbeing, because he doesn't deserve any kind of backlash and we don't want him to become a victim of trolling.



Paul Allan
@_last_outlaw

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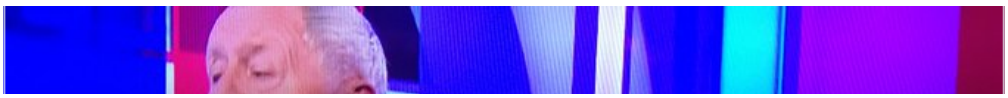
Nice to see that Cookie Monster is paying respects to the fallen

Seriously though
Why does the puppet have a poppy on?

It's a puppet...

11:34 AM - 7 Nov 2016

1 1



Ryan Boyle
@Ryan_Boyle_

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The Cookie Monster remembers. Peak respect 😳 #poppy
11:27 AM - 7 Nov 2016

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"Nice to see that Cookie Monster is paying respects to the fallen... Seriously though... Why does the puppet have a poppy on?

It's a puppet...," wrote one user.

George Ogier
@george_ogier

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The One Show have got Cookie Monster wearing a poppy. Imagine being worried that folk will complain if you don't have a puppet wearing one.
11:23 AM - 7 Nov 2016

18 32



Jamie Shoesmith
@jamesfarrier

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BBC now so terrified of the outrage that one of their guests hasn't got a poppy on they've got THE COOKIE MONSTER

2 4



Craig Cockburn
@siliconglen

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In true BBC #PoppyFascism mode on The One Show even the cookie monster muppet wears a poppy #wtf

11:23 AM - 7 Nov 2016 · Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

4

"BBC now so terrified of the outrage that one of their guests hasn't got a poppy on they've got THE COOKIE MONSTER wearing one. #TheOneShow," another added, with someone else saying: "In true BBC #PoppyFascism mode on The One Show even the cookie monster muppet wears a poppy #wtf."





Dara Ó Briain
@daraobriain

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The Cookie Monster was made to wear a Poppy on the One Show last night. I am choosing to regard this as satire, and thus genius.

12:47 AM - 8 Nov 2016

1,428 3,536

Luckily, Dara Ó Briain defended the muppet, writing: "The Cookie Monster was made to wear a Poppy on the One Show last night. I am choosing to regard this as satire, and thus genius."



Daniel Graham
@graham_foto

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At some point today the One Show production team discussed whether the Cookie Monster should wear a poppy or not.

11:31 AM - 7 Nov 2016

11 11

— Gavin Winters (@GavinWinters) November 7, 2016

And one wise Twitter user pointed out that the Cookie Monster wasn't wearing any clothes, but was wearing a poppy... HOW DID THEY PIN IT TO HIM!?

> The cookie monster is on the one show. He's not wearing clothes, but he is wearing a poppy.
> — Suzi Gage (@soozaphone) November 7, 2016

And it looks like all the backlash from his appearance on *The One Show* seemed to get to the Cookie Monster too, as this morning (November 8) he appeared on ITV's *Good Morning Britain* - this time, without a poppy.

> Today we had a magnificent hairy beast on the show... alongside @MeCookieMonster! 😁 😁 😁 pic.twitter.com/1UxhSwwbRN
> — Good Morning Britain (@GMB) November 8, 2016

The remembrance poppy has been worn by millions of people since 1921 to commemorate all military personnel who have died during conflicts since 1914.

The Poppy Appeal is the Royal British Legion's biggest fundraising campaign held every year in November, the period of Remembrance.

A number of Remembrance events, such as Remembrance Sunday (on November 13 this year), are held during the Poppy Appeal to commemorate the fallen (via www.britishlegion.org.uk).

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Cops hope heart will tell its tale after grim LES discovery

BY Rocco Parascandola Thomas Tracy

nydailynews.com

Cops hope heart will tell its tale to medical examiner after grim Lower East Side discovery

BY Rocco Parascandola Thomas Tracy
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
Thursday, October 6, 2016, 1:20 PM

There, there — the Riis Houses on the Lower East Side — was the beating of a hideous heart.

Cops are investigating a grisly discovery at a Lower East Side housing project where a heart was found in a pink box, officials said Thursday.

A 68-year-old man said he was rummaging through the garbage at the Riis Houses near FDR Drive when he found the box at the bottom of a container holding a plant at about 11 a.m. Wednesday.

The heart appeared to be human, but police brought the item to the city Medical Examiner's Office to confirm, police sources said.

Cops were trying to find out where the potted plant came from Thursday.

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Corey Feldman Gets Teary-Eyed Contacting The Late Corey Haim Via TV Psychic — But Haim's Mom Isn't Buying It

By Brent Furdyk . 20 Aug 2016 12:09 PM
WEEKNIGHTS

etcanada.com



Getty Images

Corey Feldman appears on the upcoming second season of "Hollywood Medium", with TV psychic Tyler Henry using his alleged spiritual abilities to allow Feldman to supposedly communicate with his friend and co-star Corey Haim, who passed away in 2010.

In a new promo, Feldman can be seen getting misty-eyed as he purportedly contacts Haim in the afterlife, but Haim's mom is calling BS on the whole thing, reports TMZ, writing on her Facebook page that Feldman is the *last* person her son would want to get in touch with from the great beyond.

"Judy Haim says Feldman's crying act was just that — bogus tears, shed only for a paycheque," states TMZ.

In fact, Haim adds that her son "had distanced himself from Feldman while trying to sober up in the years before his death," and she believes that Feldman is continues focusing on his friendship with her son "because he's desperate to be relevant."

According to TMZ, she claims she's "repeatedly asked Feldman to stop talking about her son and let him rest in peace."

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Coroner accidentally cremated wrong man as his family planned a funeral and viewing

2016-10-28 latimes.com

Jorge Hernandez
Attorney Luis Carrilllo

The Los Angeles County coroner's office mistakenly cremated a 26-year-old man after confusing his remains with those of another man with the same name, authorities said Friday.

Coroner's officials said the mistake occurred because a technician failed to check the case number on the man's body, and they apologized to the family.

Jorge Hernandez died of a drug overdose Oct. 7 after being taken to Glendale Adventist Medical Center. His body was picked up by the coroner's office to determine a cause. The family began planning a funeral and private viewing for Hernandez until coroner's officials called them to say they mistakenly cremated his body.

Armand Montiel, a coroner's office spokesman, said the mistake happened because two men named Jorge Hernandez were at the morgue. The other Hernandez was indigent and was scheduled to be cremated.

"When retrieving the remains the coroner's attendant matched the name but did not match the coroner case number. It was an oversight by human error," Montiel said. The attendant sent the wrong remains for cremation, he said.

"The department is profoundly sorry for any additional discomfort that this has caused the loved ones of Mr. Hernandez," Montiel said. The chief medical examiner delivered a personal apology to the family, he said.

Family members remained stunned by the mistake.

"Sorry doesn't bring him back. This was really upsetting," said Mary Lou Diaz of her nephew's cremation. "I know they have bodies stacking up but there needs to be accountability here.

"We thought, 'No, this isn't happening. They have to be wrong,' " she said. "It was devastating. There was no goodbye. There was no closure. The whole family has been affected by this double tragedy."

The incident occurred as the coroner's office is trying to reduce a major backlog in cases caused by staffing shortages. The backlog has sparked complaints from families and law enforcement officials.

Luis Carrillo, an attorney for Hernandez's family, said a lawsuit is being planned.

"The coroner's office is chronically understaffed and underfunded, so errors get made and this has a very real impact on their survivors," he said. "There was apparently no supervisor double-checking on the bodies before cremation."

Carrillo said Hernandez's mother, Mirna Amaya, was particularly hit hard by the mistake. "She wanted photos of his peacefully resting in his coffin," Carrillo said. "She is so distraught she had to seek medical treatment."

Coroner’s records show Hernandez's death was an accidental drug overdose.

The coroner’s office’s accreditation with the National Assn. of Medical Examiners was due to expire Aug. 24 but remains active pending the results and report of an inspection Oct. 17.

To keep its full, five-year accreditation, the office must be completed within 90 days in 90% of cases. However, an office with some shortcomings can receive provisional accreditation for a year. Such accreditation is not legally required but provides a guarantee of quality and bolster its credibility in court.

Officials have blamed staffing and budget shortages, broken equipment and the difficulty in recruiting and training highly skilled employees for massive backlogs on autopsies and testing. County supervisors have boosted funding and is in the process of hiring 22 additional employees.

But as of Sept. 21, toxicology and other tests had not been completed on more than 1,500 bodies — an improvement over June, when the figure was 2,100.

In 2015, the L.A. coroner’s office completed 81% of its cases within the 90-day window; the rate dropped to 78% between June 2015 and June 2016. As of last month, nearly 1,500 cases remain incomplete after 90 days, including roughly 570 that have lingered for more than 150 days.

Montiel said the coroner’s office has a strict policy requiring staffers to check the name and the coroner’s case number to make sure there are no misidentifications. He said this system has generally worked.

richard.winton@latimes.com

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Terrifying moment corpse of child saint suddenly opens her eyes

09:17, 24 Sep 2016 Updated 11:30, 24 Sep 2016 By Gemma Mullin

mirror.co.uk



Moment long-dead corpse of child saint Santa Inocencia opens its eyes

This is the terrifying moment the corpse of a child saint who died 300 years ago appears to suddenly open her eyes.

Tourists were visiting the Cathedral of Guadalajara in Jalisco in Mexico, where the preserved remains of Santa Inocencia (St Innocence) - a little girl - are encased in glass.

One visitor was filming the tour of the holy building on his camera when he captured the moment she appears to open her eyelids.

The frightening footage was posted on YouTube where it has been viewed nearly a million times.



Obscurahabitacion.blogspot.mx/Youtube

Child saint Santa Inocencia can be seen lying in her glass case where she has been displayed for hundreds of years

At first sight the corpse, which has been wax-treated for preservation and whose face hasn't decayed in 300 years, looks like a statue.

But as the camera pans up and down the body it focuses on the face before the dead girl seemingly opens her eyes.

Many viewers have called it out as being a fake but others believe it may be a sign.

There are many different stories about how the girl met her early demise.

This is the moment the wax-preserved body of the girl appears to open her eyes

The most popular version is that she was a Mexican girl who wanted to make her First Communion with classmates but it was strongly forbidden by her father.

But she was invited to be included by the nuns in her school and when her dad found out she had done it behind his back he stabbed her to death.

The locals took her body and she was returned to the cathedral where she was laid to rest and became symbolic as a silent witness of a girl’s deep love for Christ.

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Anger as council disposes of irreplaceable books donated to village after WWII air disaster



Wreckage of the 1944 Freckleton air disaster, the village's memorial and survivor Ruby Currell CREDIT: BLACKPOOL GAZETTE/SWNS.COM

By **Alice Shaw**

11 AUGUST 2016 • 12:25PM

Irreplaceable books donated by the American nation to an English village decimated in a wartime disaster have disappeared.

The books contain messages of condolence from the Americans to the villagers of Freckleton, Lancashire, following the crash in 1944.

The pilot of an American air force Liberator bomber lost control of his aircraft as he tried to land at Warton airbase.

The bomber crashed into Freckleton primary school killing 61 people including 38 children in the classrooms.

Only three pupils survived.



Freckleton air crash survivor Ruby Currell at the memorial to the disaster with the surviving books CREDIT: BLACKPOOL GAZETTE/SWNS.COM

One of them, 78-year-old Ruby Currell, described the loss of 384 books from the village library as: "The taking away of our history.

"The county council has admitted removing them... I would have have looked after them as would many in this village."

The books were donated to the children of Freckleton to replace those lost in the fireball.

They all contained personal messages.

Mrs Currell added: "They are not just important to us they are important to the Americans.

"They were dedicated to the generation of village children who lost their lives."

A spokesman for Lancashire County Council, which administers the village library where the book collection was housed, admitted that books had been removed "by mistake".

He confirmed they had been destroyed.

The spokesman added that when staff at the village library realised the significance of what they had been told to do they tried to save some of the inscriptions.

AT A GLANCE

The deadliest plane accidents on UK soil



- Staines air disaster (June 18, 1972 - 118 deaths)
- Kegworth air disaster (January 8, 1989 - 47 deaths)
- Iberia Airlines Flight 062 (November 4, 1967 - 37 deaths)
- 1949 Manchester DC-3 accident (August 19, 1949 - 24 deaths)
- 1947 Croydon Dakota accident (January 25, 1947 - 12 deaths)
- 1947 BOAC Douglas C-47 crash (January 11, 1947 - eight deaths)

Note: the Lockerbie bombing, which killed 259, was a terrorist act, not an accident.

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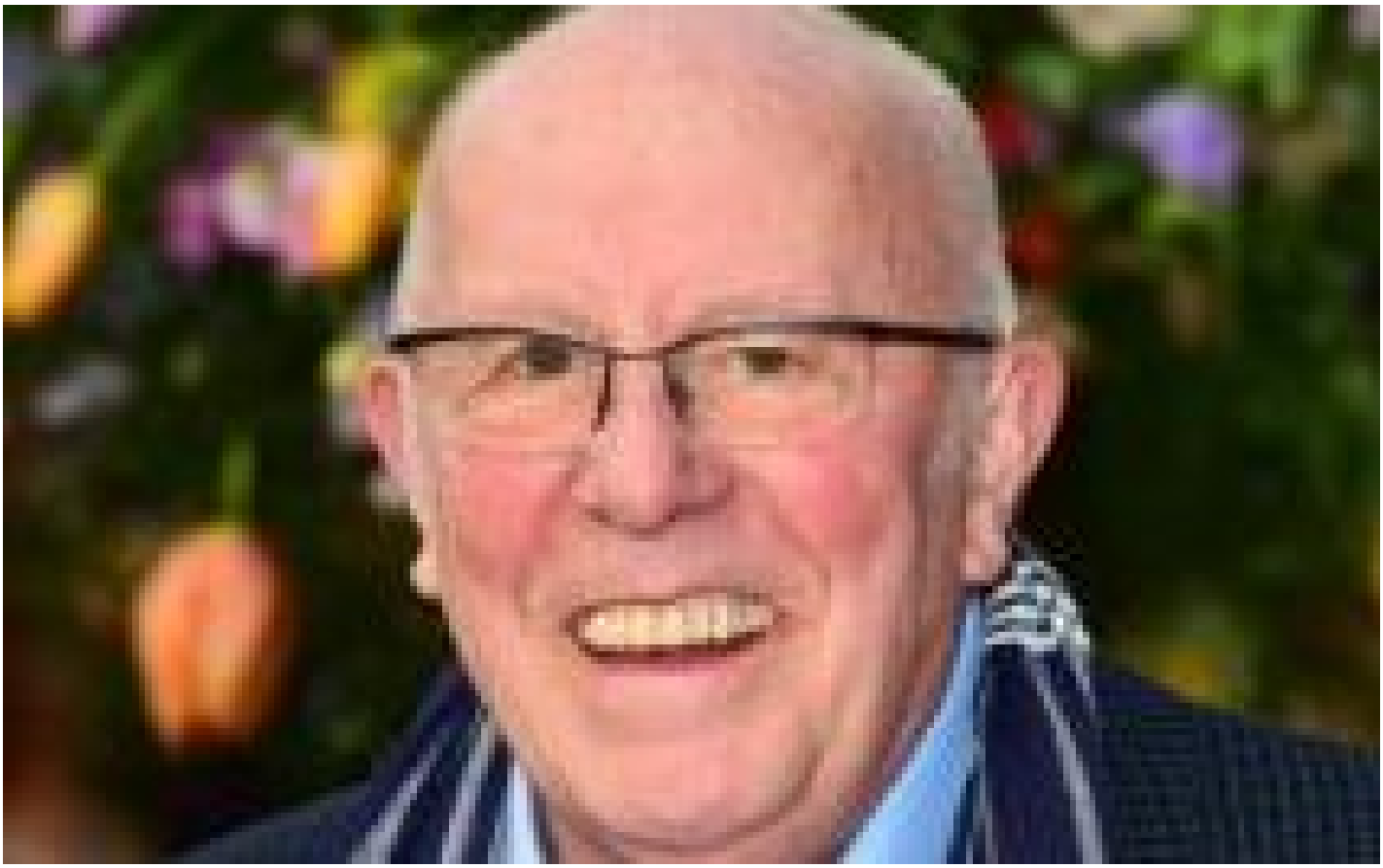
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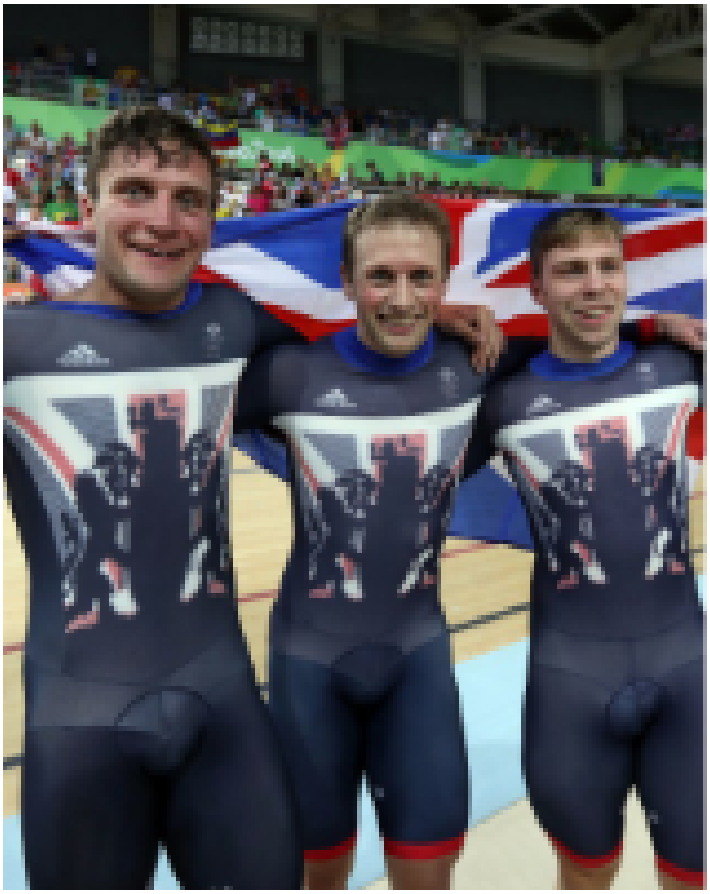
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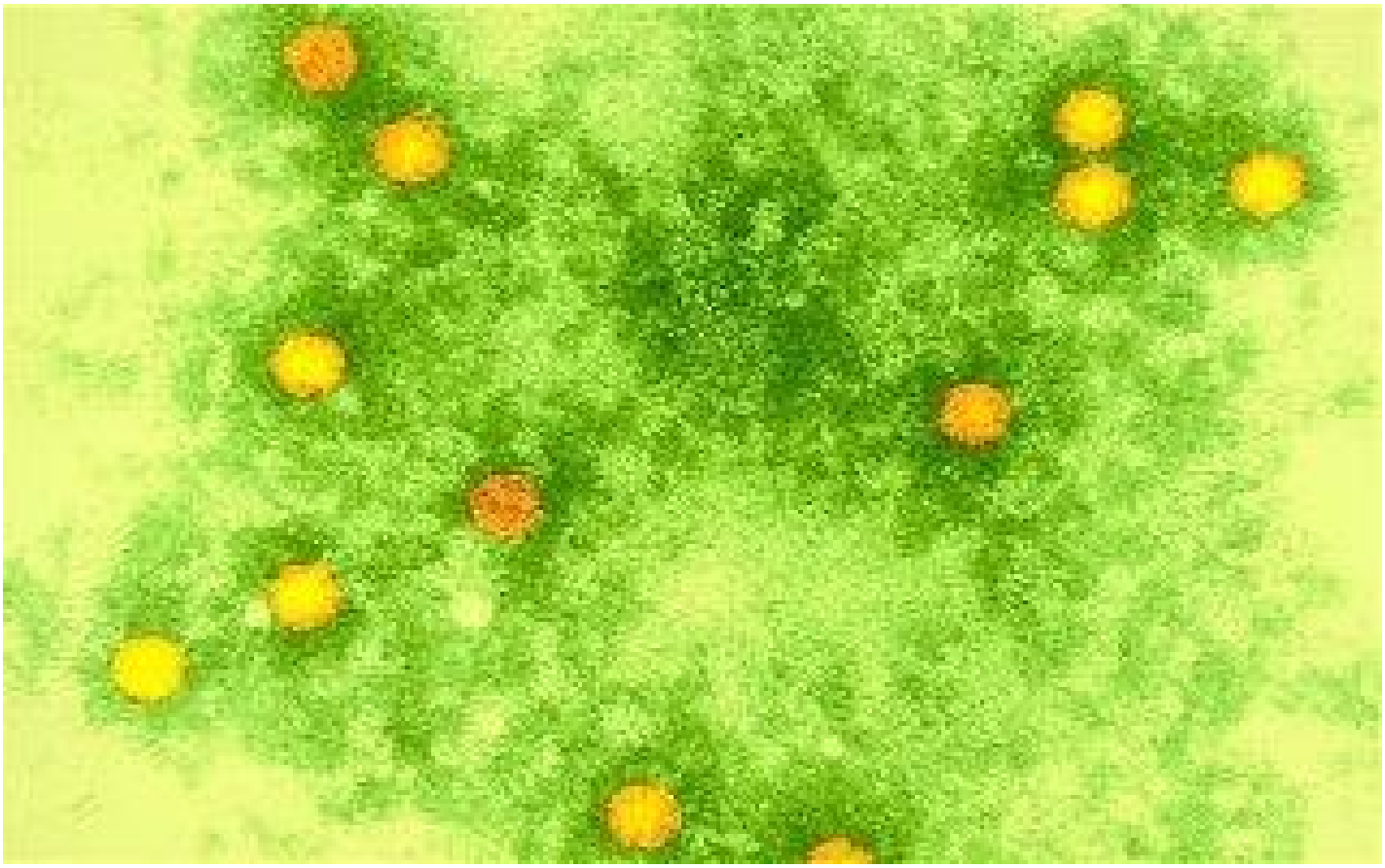
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Counterfeiter Emanuel Ninger - "Jim the Penman"

Emanuel Ninger, known as '**Jim the Penman**', was a counterfeiter in the late 1880s. He drew, by hand, $50 and $100 United States Notes. He worked for weeks at a time on each note, and this was profitable because at the time one of those notes was extremely valuable (about $2000 or $4000 in today's dollars). He gained a following, as the invariably wealthy people that ended up with these banknotes tended to realise their worth as works of art.



A fake $50 bill by counterfeiter Emanuel Ninger. This bill was seized in 1896.

Above: A fake $50 bill by counterfeiter Emanuel Ninger. This bill was seized in 1896.

He was apprehended by the United States Secret Service in 1896, after a banknote ended up in a small puddle at a bar. A none-too-amused bartender realised that the ink was staining and the note was not genuine. Ninger served six months, and was forced to pay a restitution of $1; (the rumour that the $1 was one of his own works is more than likely an urban legend). He disappeared and probably did not make more works, though the art community was holding out, hoping for more to be discovered. None ever were.

Ninger was somewhat romanticised during his time, as almost a 'Robin Hood'-like character, whose crimes were deemed 'victimless', both because only the extremely wealthy could afford the bills that he was forging, and also because with the proper art connections, one could stand to profit by receiving a Ninger work.

This raises some fundamental questions about the value of currency, and the value of art. An artist that has explored these questions in great detail is JSG Boggs. Contemporary artists that treated the art of fooling the eye (*trompe l'oeil*) more legitimately include William Harnett, John F. Peto, and John Haberle.

From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Ninger

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Couple Encounters a Black Metal Band in Woods During Engagement Shoot

2016-10-21 go.com

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01:08

Couple Encounters a Black Metal Band in Woods During Engagement Shoot

- By Eliza Murphy

Oct 21, 2016, 1:24 PM ET

John Awesome and Nydia Hernandez were having a lovely engagement photo shoot in Holy Jim Canyon, California, when they encountered something unusual: a black metal band in the middle of the woods.



Wheeland Photography

The band, Coldvoid, was also in the area shooting promo photos for its music, using the full moon on Sunday as its menacing backdrop.

“During the last part of the session, we noticed a few guys with some corpse paint makeup on sitting at a nearby bench blaring out some black metal music,” Awesome, 34, of Orange County, told ABC News. “We just randomly thought it would be a funny idea if we could get them to be a part of our engagement shoot. So we approached them and asked and they more than happy to accept! Super nice people. I seriously can't make this stuff up.”



The couple’s photographer, Janet Wheeland, struck up a conversation with the band, saying, “Looking good guys!”

Dressed in head-to-toe black clothing with lots of leather and spikes, Coldvoid even had creepy props with them, including a candelabrum, nails and swords, which definitely made for interesting engagement pictures when they crashed the background of the lovebirds’ sweet poses.

“They gave us a copy of their new demo and it was the perfect eerie soundtrack for the drive out of the woods,” said Wheeland. “It was a perfect, spontaneous finale to our photo shoot. We couldn't have planned it better.”

Wheeland Photography



Wheeland Photography

The unique photos have gone viral with nearly 600,000 views on Imgur.

“It was a perfect, spontaneous finale to our photo shoot,” Wheeland said.



Wheeland Photography

Awesome and Hernandez are no strangers to the idea of a themed photo shoot, though. In an ode to Awesome’s favorite movie, “Forrest Gump,” the two had already taken some Forrest and Jenny-themed shots earlier that day with a Bubba Gump hat and beautiful flower crown. Wheeland had encouraged them to do something to make their photos unique and personal, but what none of them knew was just how unique and personal their engagement pictures would eventually become.



Wheeland Photography

The soon-to-bride and groom plan to wed in fall of next year.

But how will they ever possibly top the Halloween-esque engagement pictures?

“If this band ends up crashing our wedding reception,” Awesome joked.

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Couple's 'Fake' Everest Photos Investigated

sky.com

Two police officers accused of superimposing themselves into images taken on top of Everest may be banned from climbing in Nepal.

08:29, UK, Thursday 07 July 2016



Image 3 and 4 are allegedly altered versions of 1 and 2. Pic: Rajan Pokhrel

An Indian couple are under investigation by Nepalese authorities amid allegations they doctored photographs of themselves to support false claims they reached the summit of Mount Everest.

Dinesh and Tarakeshwari Rathod, who are both police constables in the Indian state of Maharashtra, are accused of using another mountaineer's photographs in order to gain official climber certificates.

One man has submitted what he claims are the unaltered photos from the top of the summit, which show the same people in the background but no sign of Mr and Mrs Rathod.

Although the alleged fraud does not amount to a criminal offence, the Nepalese government could decide to revoke their certificates and ban them from mountaineering in the country for at least 10 years.

Nepal's tourism chief, Sudarshan Prasad Dhakal, said his department had spoken to the expedition's organisers and officials stationed at Everest base camp before validating the couple's certificates.

He added: "In order to provide a certificate to the climber, we rely on their photograph on top of Mount Everest … If someone fakes their photos, it's hard to determine that they are not original."

Eight climbers have filed complaints against Mr and Mrs Rathod - and say such fraudulent claims belittle the achievements of genuine mountaineers who reach the 8,848m (29,029ft) summit.

The Rathods could not be reached for comment.

Following two years of deadly disasters on the mountain, including an earthquake and multiple avalanches, a total of 456 people managed to scale the world's highest mountain this year.

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MURDER BY Gaslight

A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, August 9, 2014

The Courthouse Riots.



When William Berner was tried in 1884 for the cold-blooded murder of his boss, William Kirk, the people of Cincinnati expected a hanging. When the verdict returned was only manslaughter, the city was outraged. It was the last straw, breaching the limits of tolerance after years of political corruption, driving an angry populace into the streets for three days of violence that took fifty-four lives and left public buildings in rubble -- an uprising known as The Courthouse Riots.

Date: December 24, 1883

Location: Cincinnati, Ohio

Victim: William Kirk

Cause of Death: Blows to the head, strangulation

Accused: William Berner, Joseph Palmer

Synopsis:

William Kirk was a sand dealer who had recently started dealing in horses. On December 24, 1883 he had left his home in Cincinnati with over $200 in his pocket, bound for Cheviot to buy a horse. Four days later his body was found in the banks of a stream just outside of Cincinnati. Around his neck was a rope and his tongue protruded as if he had been choked to death. There were also marks of severe blows to the top of his head.

Some hayseeds stuck to the bloody rope suggested to police that the murder had been committed in a stable. An investigation of Cincinnati stables led quickly to the identification of the body as William Kirk; the police found blood stains and bloody clothing in Kirk's stable. Two young hostlers in his employ, eighteen-year-old William Berner, son of German immigrants, and nineteen-year-old Joe Palmer who was mixed race, had hired a wagon from a nearby livery stable and it was blood stained as well.

At first the two young men both professed innocence, but the police were convinced they were guilty and brought them in to be questioned separately. Palmer was the first to break. He said Berner had asked him to help with a delivery and Palmer agreed. He had no idea that there was a body in the wagon until Berner asked him to help unload it. He did not know how Kirk was killed.

Then Berner admitted that Kirk had been killed by blows from a hammer, but he said Palmer had delivered all the blows. Palmer took all of Kirk's money and gave Berner $100. Then Berner hired the wagon and rode part way with Palmer but was not there when the body was unloaded.

When Palmer heard Berner's story he called him a liar and made a full confession of his own. He said that he and Berner had seen Kirk, at various times, with large sums of money. They decide to rob him at the first opportunity. When they saw Kirk on the 24th, they agreed that the opportunity had come. Berner grabbed a hammer and Palmer a club, Berner struck the first blow and Palmer followed until each man had delivered four blows. When they saw that Kirk was still alive they wrapped the rope around his neck and each pulled an end with all of his might until Kirk was dead. Kirk was carrying $245 and Berner gave Palmer $100; their agreement was that the man who struck the first blow would get the lion's share. When asked what became of the money Palmer responded, "I went out with three or four fellows on Christmas night, and we blowed it all in. I have told the whole truth now, and nothing but the truth, and I feel a hundred times lighter."

Palmer said that he expected Berner to go free because his people had money. In hindsight he knew the murder was a mistake. He told reporters, "This is a hell of a murder, and we ought to be lynched."

Trial: William Berner - March 3, 1884



Berner and Palmer were tried separately, with Berner's case taken up first. The trial lasted longer than two weeks with the prosecution painstakingly building a circumstantial case. Berner maintained that he has witnessed Palmer commit the murder but had no part in its planning or execution. But no one believed him and there was little doubt that Berner would be found guilty of first degree murder. He had murdered Kirk in cold blood, in broad daylight, on the day before Christmas, and the people of Cincinnati were in no mood for mercy.

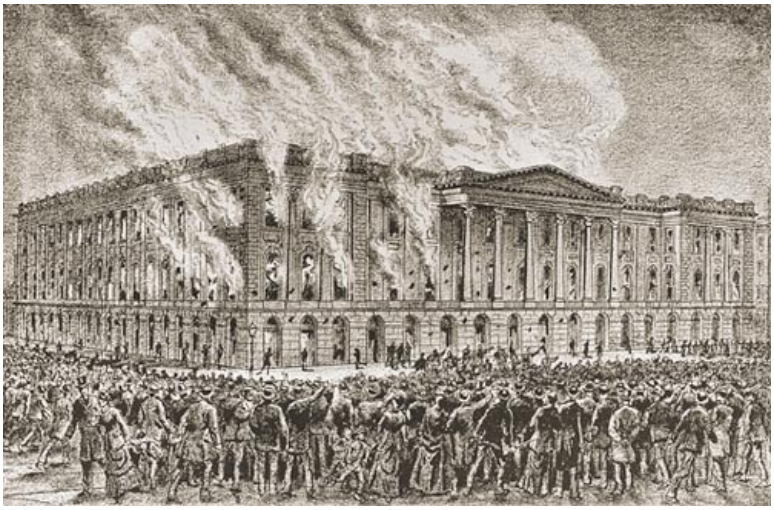
But apparently the jury was. After some deliberation they sent a message to the judge asking if they could recommend mercy. "We are gone…" said the prosecutor, "Berner will never hang." The judge predicted a verdict of second degree murder. Everyone was shocked when the jury found Berner guilty of manslaughter, with a maximum sentence of twenty years. The spectators booed and hissed the jury and the judge exclaimed, "It's a damned outrage." He dismissed the jury without the customary thanks and they hurried from the courtroom to escape the angry crowd.

Verdict: Guilty of manslaughter

Aftermath:

In 1884, the government of Cincinnati was corrupt and dysfunctional; controlled by a virtual feudalism of competing neighborhood gangs. Mayoral elections would often include half a dozen candidates with no one winning a majority and the winner too weak to govern. Every function of city government was retailed by someone, and criminal jury verdicts were a big ticket item.

Government anarchy was mirrored on the streets, and Cincinnati was suffering a wave of unrelated murders, averaging nearly two murder arrests per week. That spring, twenty-three indicted murderers were awaiting trial, including a man who had murdered his wife with an ax and two men who had killed an entire family in order to sell their corpses to a medical school. Berner's verdict was the last straw; many believed that the jury had been bought and serious threats of lynching were heard throughout the city.



Three days later a group of sixty-four prominent citizens called for a public meeting to be held at the Music Hall. The goal was to call for a legitimate reform movement to oust the gangs and restore the rule of law to their city. 10,000 people attended the meeting, but the call from the crowd was not for reform. It was “Hang Berner.” A torrent of angry men poured from the Music Hall out into the street, bent on a lynching. The police at City Jail held on as long as they could, but the mob ultimately stormed the building and swarmed through the rows of darkened cells looking for Berner among the cowering prisoners. When they didn’t find him, they tried to burn down the jail. Then, failing that, the mob spread through the city looting gun shops, pawnshops, and wet goods stores. Retreating police telegraphed Columbus for help from the State Militia.

The mob had been unable to find Berner because the police, afraid of trouble, had previously secreted him on board a train to the State Penitentiary, accompanied by two detectives and Cincinnati Enquirer reporter Ed Anthony, all posing as cigar salesmen. The ploy had given them a head start, but the telegraph was faster than the train and the anger had been transmitted to every station between Cincinnati and Columbus. In the town of Loveland, Ohio, the train was boarded by vigilantes and in the ensuing confusion Berner managed to escape and flee into the nearby woods. The armed citizens of Loveland swarmed into the woods and for several hours Berner’s fate hung on whether they or the Cincinnati police found him first. With no idea where he was, Berner had not traveled very far from the train and was never out of earshot of the crowd. He knew his position was hopeless, and, looking for the best deal possible, he surrendered to Ed Anthony, who handed him over to the custody of the Cincinnati police. The train then proceeded safely to the penitentiary with no further incident.



The State Militia arrived in Cincinnati early Saturday morning and, as the riot showed no sign of

abating, saw action immediately. News of the uprising had spread through the Midwest, and that morning the rioters were joined by anarchists from Chicago and elsewhere. For a time, men who had been lifelong Republicans or Democrats were marching together under the red flag, exchanging gunfire with their state’s Militia. When it became clear to commanders that the Militia’s presence was fueling the riot rather than quelling it, they unilaterally pulled back, expecting to see the rioters follow suit.

But it was too late to hope for restraint. The rioters used the lull to execute the defining act of the uprising: they set fire to the Courthouse and burned it to the ground. Acts of destruction and vandalism continued throughout the city for the next two days. The Militia called in reinforcements and redoubled their efforts, mounting Gatling guns on sandbag barricades and overturned wagons. Sometime on Sunday night, the third night of the riot, the threat posed by the viscous guns combined with fatigue slowed, then ended, the mood of violence. But not before fifty-four men had been killed and an estimated two hundred wounded.

Trial: Joseph Palmer - June 10, 1884

Joe Palmer's trial was something of an anticlimax after tumult caused by the Berner verdict. The biggest problem for the court was assembling a jury of men who had not already made up their minds against Palmer.

Drawing from a pool of at least 236 men, it took several days to find twelve who could be considered Impartial. In the end, no one was surprised that they found Palmer guilty of first degree murder.

Verdict: Guilty of first degree murder.

Aftermath:

After an unsuccessful motion for a new trail, Joe Palmer was sentenced to hang. The execution on July 15, 1885, was private, held in the jail yard with the scaffold shielded from view by a stone wall and a large awning. Outside, crowds of people lined the adjacent streets to await news of Palmer's death. At two minutes after ten a.m. the trap was sprung but the fall did not break Palmer's neck. It was another twenty-six minutes before Joe Palmer was pronounced dead.

On June 4, 1895, after serving eleven years of his twenty year sentence, William Berner was paroled by the Board of Managers of the Ohio Penitentiary for good behavior. He quickly left for Indiana and was never heard from again.

Following the Courthouse Riots, the people of Cincinnati did obtain government stability, if not the reform they desired. The situation paved the way for George B. Cox, boss of one of the most powerful political machines in American history. Well into the twentieth century, Boss Cox and his inner circle had absolute control over all facets of city government.

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Posted by Robert Wilhelm

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Randolph County man covered his Blazer with 51,300 pennies

myfox8.com

RANDOLPH COUNTY, N.C. -- A Randolph County man is turning heads everywhere he goes.

Larry Hall has a 2000 Chevrolet Blazer that he covered with pennies - 51,300 to be exact.

Although some do occasionally fall off, he just glues them back on.

"I had to put them on one-by-one and it took about seven weeks and six or seven hours a day," he said. "It took 80 tubes of silicone glue and three gallons of fiberglass boat glue."

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DD2 elementary school students suspended for having 'crack candy'

DORCHESTER COUNTY, S.C. (WCIV) — abcnews4.com

By ALEX HEATON Tuesday, November 1st 2016

Some parents in Dorchester County are furious after nine students at Eagles Nest Elementary School were suspended for violating a school drug policy.

The problem parents say is the children weren't caught with drugs. They were accused of having sugar mixed with Kool-Aid in their possession.

ABC News 4 spoke with one parent Tuesday who said her child's infraction was reduced during an expulsion hearing at the district office. The child is now on a probationary status with the district and will be able to return to school Thursday.

"We called the school board, and they expedited the hearing to Tuesday," said one woman whose son was suspended. "So, today was the expulsion hearing. All the students were put up for expulsion for having Kool-Aid and sugar which was called "happy crack".

The woman said she didn't even know what "happy crack" was when school officials called her last week to say her son was being suspended.

"The way she called me, I thought my son died," she said. "She said there's this epidemic going on at school with happy crack. I Googled it. I'm like Kool-Aid and sugar, are you serious? I was appalled. I was floored. I really didn't think it would go to this extreme."

Administrators at the district office say possession of any substance, whether illegal or not, that looks like an illegal substance is a violation of a school policy, stating the following:

"No student will market or distribute any substance which is represented to be or is substantial similar in color, shape, size or markings of a controlled substance in any of the circumstances listed above. Look-alike substance or substances that mimic the effect of drugs will be treated as illegal substances."

It is a level three offense and constitutes criminal conduct under the JICH, a South Carolina code of laws.

Parents told ABC News 4 they had no idea of the policy in the district's handbook and neither did their children. They say they children thought they were buying the equivalent of a pixie stick.

"His intent was not malicious," one woman told us. "The other children's intent was not malicious, but they were treated like criminals. They are ten years old. To go about it the way they did, ostracize the children, call the school board, when I know of other school districts who have had the same issue and those children weren't treated as harshly."

She said it is uncalled for, disappointing and disheartening.

As for the children's punishment, school officials said all disciplinary hearings for the students are finished. All of the students were facing expulsion, but the offenses have been reduced to level one

infractions.

This isn't the first time "crack candy" has made headlines. Last year an 8th-grader in Cleveland was suspended for five days.

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The Creatures of Samhain

Updated on December 8, 2015

hubpages.com

http://hubpages.com/education/The-Creatures-of-Samhain



Arthur Rackham "Autumn Dancing Fairies" (public domain)

Arthur Rackham "Autumn Dancing Fairies" (public domain)

The meaning of the word Samhain comes from Old Irish meaning “summer’s end,” from summer, samh and end, fuin. The modern Irish word for summer is samhradh, and Samhain is still the name for the month of November in Ireland. Celts considered sundown as the start of the day, which is why, though Samhain actually falls on November 1st, it would have been celebrated starting at sundown the night before, on October 31st. It is one of the four main festivals in Celtic tradition, making up the “quarter days,” the days between the equinoxes and solstices.

With Samhain comes a wide variety of supernatural creatures.

The festival of Samhain has many names and is celebrated differently throughout the Celtic lands. Now it is synonymous with the American-born holiday Halloween; with older traditions becoming more modern while others have returned to their roots, and some simply being a part of the modern celebrations.



Turnip-o-lantern

Turnip-o-lantern | Source

As most of the legends and aspects come from Ireland, let’s start with Oíche Shamnha, or Night of Samhain, as it is called on the Emerald Isle. On this night, the dead and the Aos Sí, also known as fairies or the Shining Ones, come out from their mounds and visit us from the Otherworld, due to the veil between the worlds being at its thinnest at this time. It is wise to stay indoors on this night, or at the very least to have travel companions, as the hosts of the Aos Sí might kidnap you and take you away to their realms. Families would leave a spot at the table open so their ancestors could join them. In the case of both Otherworld visitors, gifts of food and drink would be left outside the house to appease them, thus quelling any anger or mischief they had in store.

On Samhain, household fires would be extinguished, to be relit from a communal bonfire, in order to cleanse the house and start the year anew. The Hills of Tara and Tlachtga, which are about 12 miles apart from each other, and are located less than 30 miles northwest of Dublin, are particularly associated with this, as locations of fire festivals. Another location linked to Samhain is Oweynagat (“cave of cats”) in County Roscommon, from whence the hosts of the Otherworld spew forth.

Sunset at the Hill of Tara | Source

Samhain holds importance in many of the Irish myths and the Irish polytheistic religion. The Ulster Cycle mentions Samhain several times. It is the first quarter day discussed by the heroine Emer in the Tochmarc Emire. The later sagas Mesca Ulad and Serglige Con Culainn start at Samhain.

The Irish hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill protects Tara from the god Aillen at Samhain. The Dagda, the Irish All-Father, has an affair with The Morrígan at Samhain (the Irish goddess of battle and strife) to ensure his victory in battle. The Morrígan is associated with Samhain on her own; as she rides out of the Sídhe of Cruachan on this night in a chariot, pulled by A One-legged Horse! Darker connections occur with Donn, a Celtic god of the dead, and with Crom Cruaich, a deity with connections to ritual slaughter.

Fionn mac Cumhaill, by Stephen Reid (public domain)



Sunset at the Hill of Tara



Fionn mac Cumhaill, by Stephen Reid (public domain)

Scotland has the most in common with Ireland's festival, with even the name Oidhche Shamhna being very similar. This is natural, as they are both Goidelic Gaelic languages.

Samhain's pagan traditions are still strong in Scotland, with games of divination still being played, as divination is most effective when the veil is thin.

Robert Burns, the best-known poet of Scotland, wrote the poem "Halloween," containing many references to pagan practices which continued as Scottish Halloween traditions well into his time. For example, young women would peel apples and see what initial the peeling formed, as that would tell you the first letter of the name of your future husband. Or, engaged or newlywed couples would each put nuts, often hazelnuts, beside each other in the fire and whether the nuts stayed together in the flames or moved apart would be an indicator of the couple's future happiness. However, the nuts might hiss and spit at each other.



Illustration of Robert Burn's Halloween (JM Wright and Edward Scriven)

Illustration of Robert Burn's Halloween (JM Wright and Edward Scriven)

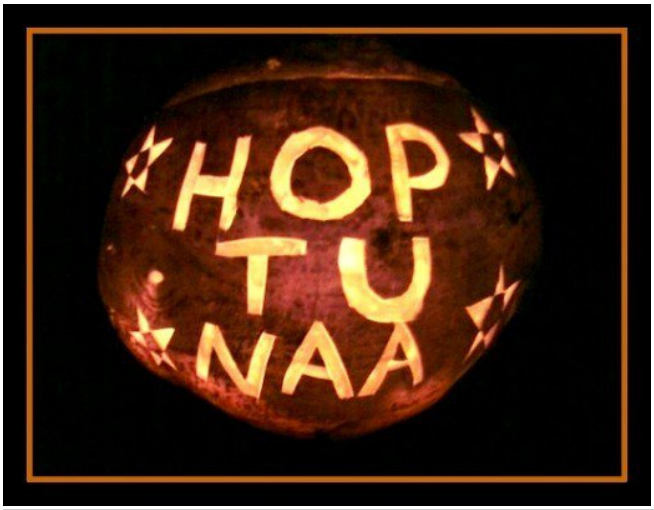
A more recent tradition in Scotland is the seasonal eating of pork pies or sausage rolls. Due to the Witchcraft Act of 1735, it was illegal to eat pork, so when that act was ended in the 1950s, these dishes became very popular again for Halloween in Scotland.

In Gaelic lore, and especially in Scotland, the Cailleach is the divine hag who represents the winter with her seasonal rule starting on Samhain and lasting until the first of the summer on Bealtainn. The west coast of Scotland has her washing her great plaid for three days in a giant coastal whirlpool, which ends with the land being blanketed in snow.

In Wales this day is called Nos Calan Gaeaf. The name is derived from the Latin term for the first day of the month (calends) and the Welsh term for winter. It was one of the Ysbrydnos, the days when spirits walked abroad, with the other being Bealtainn. One particular form of traditional divination was families placing stones around a fire with each of their names on them. If someone's stone was missing in the morning, that person could plan on dying that year. In Welsh lore, a spirit called Yr Hwch Ddu Gwta takes the form of a black sow and roams the countryside with a headless woman at this time.

On the Isle of Man, Hop-tu-Naa is celebrated. As in other Celtic lands, jack-o-lanterns are carved out of turnips, called swedes by the Manx. Divination was also used at Nop-tuNaa, in that families would scatter ashes at the door. The direction of the first footprint would determine whether the household in the coming year would see a death, if the footprint is facing away from the house, or a birth, if the footprint is facing towards the house. The future could also be conjured in prophetic dreams by stealing a neighbor's salt herring and eating it before going to bed. It makes one wonder who was foolish enough to leave their salt herring on display this night!

The Celts and their druids did not leave many written records but rather used an oral tradition that entailed decades of training. Because of that, and of the Romans' ability to culturally ensnare those they've conquered or accepted, there are no extant records of any rituals, let alone Samhain rituals. Fortunately, that does not stop modern people from celebrating the festival with their own rituals. Celtic Reconstructionists, Neopagans, and



Wiccans all have their own styles for creating rituals, and for Samhain this typically involves an acknowledgement that the summer is ending and the new year is beginning, as it grows ever darker. From that point the rituals, and their "creatures," can diverge greatly in style, even within the same religion.

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Creepy Clown Hoaxes Lead to 12 Arrests in Multiple States

nytimes.com

The New York Times

By CHRISTOPHER MELESEPT. 29, 2016



Reports to the police about sightings of creepy clowns have proliferated in several states in the past few weeks. Credit Tim Boyle/Getty Images

The reports to the police had one thing in common with the circus act involving an improbable number of clowns emerging from a small car.

They just kept coming, and coming, and coming, across multiple states. Clowns in vans. Clowns in the woods. Clowns lurking in the shadows. Clowns chasing people or doing crimes.

But in recent weeks, steady police work has turned the news around, with 12 people facing charges of making false reports or threats, or chasing people, the authorities said. Other cases seem attributable to children with overactive imaginations, teenagers pulling pranks and others with their own reasons for adding to the hysteria. At least one death has been linked to a clown hoax.

On Friday, schools in Reading, Ohio, were closed out of concern for the safety of students after a woman said she was attacked by a man dressed as a clown, the school district announced. A youth was arrested the day before in connection with a clown threat to harm students at a school in Colerain Township, the police said on Facebook.

The first reports of unusual clown sightings surfaced late in August in Greenville County, S.C., with stories that the costumed figures were offering children money to lure them into the woods or were lingering in places and giving residents the heebie-jeebies.

From there, the reports became a contagion, with sightings claimed in at least six other states: Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Even as the police were unable to verify the reports, they proliferated.

The drumbeat of negative publicity even prompted the Ali Ghan Shriners Club's clown unit in Maryland to withdraw from a parade planned for October in Hagerstown, said Tom Holland, a member of the group, in an interview with The Cumberland Times-News on Wednesday.

The experts weighed in with explanations. David G. Myers, a professor of psychology at Hope College in Holland, Mich., attributed the epidemic of sightings to "mass hysteria" as people's fears and feelings fed on one another. Jason D. Seacat, an associate professor of psychology at Western New England University in Springfield, Mass., suggested another motive for the outbreak: a need for people to feel connected to a news event that had garnered national headlines.

“Since the event appears to be difficult to verify, the claim that one has had such an encounter is easier to make and relatively free from the risk of being called out as a fraud,” he said in an email. “So, low risk of being called out for lying and the benefit of positive attention for reporting such a claim may motivate some people to lie.”

But that low risk has evaporated as the police have worked to get to the bottom of the reports. Among the cases:

• The Troup County Sheriff’s Office in LaGrange, Ga., about 70 miles southwest of Atlanta, said deputies on Sept. 14 investigated a report of people dressed as clowns and standing near a white van. They found a driver who said he had run out of gas. Deputies who searched the van found no costumes in or around the vehicle, the office said on Facebook.

When the authorities interviewed the person who called in the sightings, Brandon J. Moody, 26, they said that he admitted to making up the story. He also implicated his sister-in-law, Rebecca Moody, 27, in calling 911 about seeing clowns.

The pair were charged with obstruction and unlawful conduct during a 911 call, the sheriff’s office said. Neither could be reached to comment.

In another incident in LaGrange, the police said on Facebook that they had issued warrants for four people on charges of making terroristic threats and disrupting public schools after officials received “numerous” Facebook messages on Sept. 12 about individuals dressed as clowns threatening to commit acts of violence at three schools.

The police noted that “significant resources” had been committed to respond to the threats by both law enforcement and the schools.

“The suspects indicated that they would be dressed as ‘creepy clowns’ and would be driving a white van,” the department said. Officers received numerous calls of “creepy clowns” in different areas of the city but found none, the police said.

The identities of the subjects of the warrants were not immediately available. It was not clear on Wednesday if arrests had been made.

The department said in a separate Facebook post that it had received calls about clowns in a van trying to talk to children in wooded areas.

“This behavior is not cute or funny,” a police statement said. “Understand that if officers see this behavior, you’re going to have a conversation with them.”

• On Sept. 15, in Flomaton, Ala., about 65 miles northeast of Mobile, the Escambia County Sheriff’s Office and Flomaton Police Department received reports of what they believed to be credible threats to students at Flomaton High School via a Facebook account belonging to “Flomo Klown” and “Shoota Cllown,” officials said on Facebook.

Schools were locked down while officials searched the buildings, officials said. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the police from Alabama and Florida got involved. Makayla Smith, 22, of Flomaton, was charged with making a terrorist threat, the police said. Two juveniles, whose names were not released, were also found to have been involved. Charges are pending against them.

• In Beauregard, Ala., about 60 miles east of Montgomery, a 16-year-old high school student was charged with making terrorist threats on Sept. 21, the Lee County Sheriff's Office and the Opelika Police Department said on Facebook.

The girl, whose name was not released, used a Facebook page called "Kaleb Klown" and wrote about going to area schools with a firearm, and threatening the school, the television station WRBL reported.

• Henrico County Police in Virginia said two teenagers face charges after they chased children while wearing clown masks in Henrico, about 10 miles east of Richmond, on Wednesday.

• In Annapolis, Md., four students, ages 7 to 9, who said they had seen clowns on their way to school were re-interviewed on Sept. 20 by the police, who learned those reports were unfounded, The Washington Post reported. Other creepy clown sightings have been reported in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

• And lest anyone think the police are overreacting, at least one death has been linked to an apparent clown hoax. In Reading, Pa., a 16-year-old boy was fatally stabbed on Sunday after a confrontation that may have been provoked by prowler wearing a clown mask, The Associated Press reported.

The New York Times

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Does this image show a GHOST girl with her teddy photobombing a family in the cinema?

express.co.uk

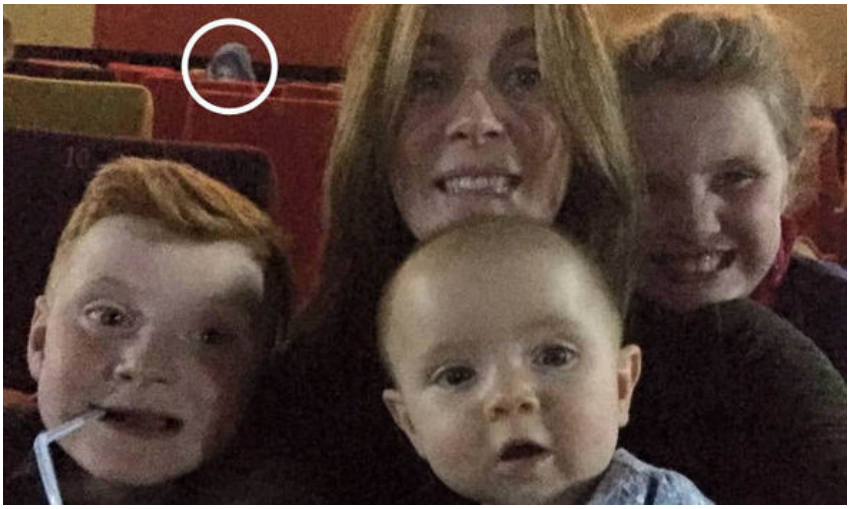
EXPRESS Home of the Daily and Sunday Express

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Does this image show a GHOST girl with her teddy photobombing a family in the cinema?

AN UNSUSPECTING mother claims her family was photobombed by a GHOST girl holding a teddy bear as they posed for a selfie in an empty cinema.

PUBLISHED: 09:47, Mon, Aug 8, 2016 | UPDATED: 10:08, Mon, Aug 8, 2016



MERCURY

Emma Johnson and her kids where photobombed by what they believe was a ghost child

Emma Johnson, 35, from Liverpool, waited for the screen at the Light Cinema in nearby New Brighton to empty before taking a snap with George, six, Ava, eight and first-time cinema-goer seven-month-old Harper.

But when the family, who were watching new Disney Pixar flick Finding Dory, checked the photo back at home they discovered they were seemingly not alone.

And carer Ms Johnson insists she was forced to tell her kids that the weird shape was a marketing ploy to promote the new Ghostbusters film to stop her children being scared.

She shared the snap, which was taken at 12.30pm last Tuesday, online - suggesting the 'ghost' could have been a girl who drowned near the coastal cinema in the past.

Emma said: "I wanted to take a selfie because it was the first time that Harper had been to the cinema but I was really self-conscious so I made sure that the cinema was empty.

"I even bumped into a friend who was on the back row and she assured me that there was no one there when I spoke to her later.

The eerie figure of what appears to resemble a small child

"It was only when we got home and checked the photo that we saw the ghost and I could make out a little girl and a teddy next to her. I didn't even think that it was possible to have a teddy bear ghost.

> I didn't even think that it was possible to have a teddy bear ghost
>
> Emma Johnson

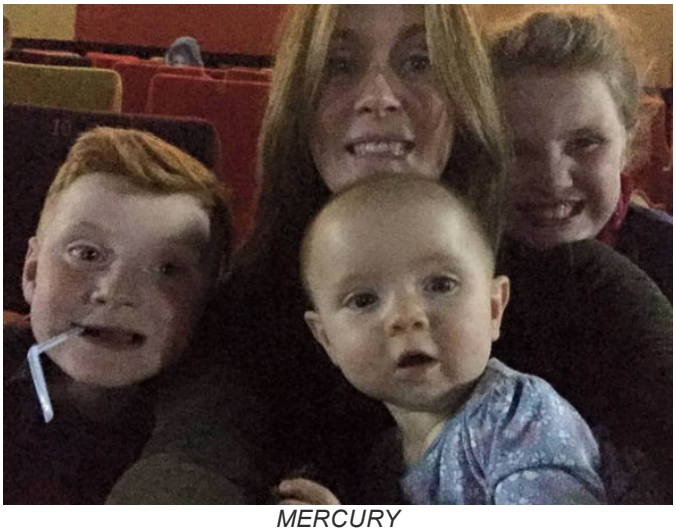


MERCURY

"My family are normally all quite sceptical, but everyone was a bit shocked when they saw it and I'm quite interested to find out what it could be.

"But we've had to hide it from the kids in case they are scared so we have just told them that it is an advert for Ghostbusters but my eldest is starting to cotton on now."

Ms Johnson admitted she was a spook-sceptic before the snap but her close encounter with the spectre has her intrigued by the paranormal.



MERCURY

The family were shocked to make the discovery when they got home from the cinema trip

But after sharing the photo, the mum-of-three said she was met with accusations that she had used digital software to edit the image.

However, Ms Johnson insists her first meeting with a 'ghost' was genuine.

Ms Johnson said: "As soon as I shared the picture, I got some people accusing me of using Photoshop or apps on my phone but I'm rubbish with technology so I wouldn't even know where to start.



GOOGLE STREET VIEW

The mum was at the Light Cinema in New Brighton watching finding Dory with her kids

"I just shared it online because I was trying to shed some light on who the ghost could have been.

"Because the cinema is right near the sea, I don't know if it is of a little girl who drowned or something like that, but no one has mentioned any incidents like that just yet."

A spokesman for the Light Cinema declined to comment on the incident.

5 Comments
15 hours ago
MikeeP

Seems to be a setup, composition offset to that side. George looks more like a ventriloquists dummy. Very low res for a phone
16 hours ago
AlfGarnet
UK4 Ever Its NOT a Cigarette, look closer its a bent STRAW and YES one of the rare genuine Ghost photos I have evr seen.
17 hours ago
UK4Ever
BS. And why does 6 year old George appear to have a cigarette in his mouth?
7 hours ago
Spartan Man 5
It's a drinking straw.
18 hours ago
RichardF
I wouldn't have thought so.

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Halloween Horror Post #6: Forensic Science and the Creepy Legend of the Ourang Medan

strangeremains.com

By strangeremains*on*October 7, 20160



Illustration from a novel The Ghost Ship by John Conroy Hutcheson. Image credit: Wikipedia

According to legend, some time in the 1940's a ship named the *S.S. Ourang Medan* sent a distress signal as it traveled through the South Pacific. The S.O.S. said that the officers aboard were dead and rest of the crew were dying. Another vessel answered the call and, when its crew boarded the *Ourang Medan*, they saw dead bodies lying all over the deck. Since none of the corpses had any visible marks and there wasn't any sign of blood, it was a mystery as to how so many sailors had perished. The rescuers searched for possible survivors on the bridge and below deck but had to abandon ship when they heard an explosion. A fire eventually burned the *Ourang Medan* entirely.

Many people doubt that the *Ourang Medan* existed or that its crew was mysteriously killed because the legend of this ghost ship has a few versions with differing details. But if the crew of this ship was slaughtered in some horrific manner, forensic science can offer some insight on the possible causes of death.

Theories for Cause of Death

If the ship existed and the corpses aboard the ghost ship were found with no signs of blood or marks, then there are a few possibilities like poison and hazardous gases.

Fast-Acting Poison

Fast acting poisons like cyanide or strychnine can kill within minutes after ingestion without any outward signs of foul play. Cyanide, in the form of salts or gas, causes death by interfering with the way cells process oxygen (cellular hypoxia). This poison can cause seizures and death within minutes of ingestion or inhalation.

Strychnine also kills within minutes of swallowing thanks to violent convulsions that prevent respiration. But this poison has a bitter taste and would be easily detected if ingested.

This theory means that this was either a suicide, a mass murder, or a murder-suicide. If this was a suicide then there would not have been a distress call to begin with. This also doesn't explain the explosion.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Another theory put forward for the mass deaths onboard the Ourang Medan is carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a malfunction in the ship's boiler system. Carbon monoxide is a odorless toxic gas that can kill if too much is inhaled. Lethal amounts of the toxic gas can cause asphyxiation within minutes of inhalation.

Carbon monoxide poisoning would explain the deaths of the crew inside the ship, but this cause of death doesn't make sense for the bodies outside on the deck. Outdoor carbon monoxide poisoning

is extremely rare because the gas needs to saturate the atmosphere.

Hazardous Materials

Other people speculate that the vessel was transporting hazardous chemicals like nitroglycerin or some sort of nerve gas. According to this version, when sea water breached the containers holding this material, a toxic gas was released that could have killed the crew.

There are many skeptics who doubt the veracity of this ghost ship legend because there are at least three versions that note different dates, locations, and describe the ship in different ways.

Report from the *Yorkshire Post* in 1940

Estelle Hargraves of the *Skittish Library* uncovered one of the earliest reports known to have been published about this gruesome ghost ship. The article, "Mystery SOS From Death Ship," is a first hand account from one of the merchant marine officers who claimed to have boarded the floating vessel. It was reported by the Associated Press and published in the *Yorkshire Post* on November 21, 1940.

> 'We were about 200 miles south-west of the Solomon Islands,' said the officer, 'when we intercepted the following signal, 'SOS from the steamship Ourang Medan. Beg ships with short wave wireless get touch doctor. urgent.'
>
> 'With our short wave set we relayed the call for help. Medical stations in Germany, Rome, and France replied. We informed the Ourang Medan and asked her to transmit her request.
>
> 'The Ourang Medan replied with its auxillary transmitter. 'Probable second officer dead. Other members crew also killed. Disregard medical consultation. SOS urgent assistance warship…'
>
> 'At the end of 16 hours we sighted a big ship on the horizon. It flew no flag, was listing slightly to the starboard, and the propeller motionless. From our bridge we could see it was the *Ourang Medan*…'
>
> 'We launched two lifeboats with eight men in each and rowed across to the Ourang Medan and boarded her.'
>
> 'Bodies of sailors were lying about on the deck. We could find no sign of a wound on any of them. Death seemed to have taken them by surprise at their posts.'
>
> 'On the captain's bridge we found the body of a second officer. We counted 12 bodies, three of them of deck officers, but we reckoned the Ourang Medan should have had a crew of about 40.'
>
> 'The captain decided to search the officers' quarters but we heard an explosion in the ship's hold. A column of smoke belched from the second hatchway.'

Report from *De locomotief: Samarangsch handels- en advertentie-blad* in 1948

This article was published in the Dutch-Indonesian newspaper *De locomotief: Samarangsch handels- en advertentie-blad* three times between February 3rd and 28th of 1948. The original story can be found here but Hargaves summarizes a portion of it:

> "At some point around June 1947, a SOS message in Morse code was sent by the Dutch freighter ship, the *Ourang Medan*. The ship was in distress in a position 400 nautical miles south-east of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean… As received by the US ships the *City of Baltimore* and the *Silver Star*, the first message said "*S.O.S. from Ourang Medan * * * we float. All officers including the Captain, dead in chartroom and on the bridge. Probably whole of crew dead * * *."* Some morse gibberish followed, and then the second, and final, message sent by a doomed radio operator was received. It simply said "*I die*." (*Summary from Estelle Hargraves)*

The crew from the *Silver Star* found the Ourang Medan crew in much the same way that the sailors from the earlier account did: corpses on the deck, eyes and mouths frozen open. Again, nothing was found that would explain the deaths. A fire erupted soon after the crew boarded and the ship exploded.

Report from The Proceedings from the Merchant Marine Council in 1952

Another version of the Ourgan Medan legend was written for *The Proceedings from the Merchant Marine Council* in 1952

> "Perhaps one of the most perturbing sea dramas occurred in February 1948. Radio silence was broken with an urgent S.O.S. from the S.S. Ourang Medan, a Dutch vessel, then proceeding through the Straits of Malacca. The strange distress call, transmitted in Morse Code, eerily read, 'S.O.S. from Ourang Medan * * * we float. All officers, including the Captain, dead in chartroom and on the bridge. Probably whole of crew dead * * *' A few confused dots and dashes later two words came through clearly. They were 'I die.' Then, nothing more. Later the Ourang Medan was found adrift approximately 50 miles from her indicated position. When the vessel which had stumbled across her sent a boat over to investigate, the sailors swarming aboard the Ourang Medan found a sight seldom seen. There wasn't a living person or creature on board. There were dead men every where. Bodies were strewn about the decks, in the passageways, in the charthouse, on the bridge. Sprawled on their backs, the frozen faces upturned to the sun with mouths gaping open and eyes staring, the dead bodies resembled horrible caricatures. Even the ship's dog was found dead. Yet, the bodies seemed to bear no sign of injury or wounds. Then, when a fire was discovered in No.4 hold, she had to be abandoned. A few minutes later an explosion followed and the Ourang Medan sank."

Some people doubt this Dutch corpse ship existed because the vessel itself wasn't listed on a register of merchant ships and, as Hargraves carefully points out, crucial details of the accounts vary.

Supposedly the *S.S. Ourang Medan* is not listed in the Lloyd's Shipping Register, a list published annually of all merchant vessels weighing more than 100 gross tonnes.

There are three different years in which the ship was supposedly found: 1940, 1947, and 1948. Each version also describes a different location where the vessel was discovered: near

the Solomon Islands, the Marshall Islands, and the Straits of Malacca. Also, the *Yorkshire Post* story describes the *Ourang Medan* as a steamship, and the Dutch version says its freighter.

True or not, this story is definitely compelling, which is probably why it keeps getting retold.

Hargraves' article is really informative and well-researched. It's definitely worth a read for anyone who wants to learn more about Ourang Medan.

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You can now get a coffee mug made from your dead loved one's ashes

metro.co.uk



You can now get a coffee mug made from your dead loved one's ashes

Losing a friend or family member is horrible. All you want is to be close to them and be surrounded by things that remind you of your relationship.

This is what it's like to live in one of the ultra-luxurious caravans on show at the Hull Fair

But if they've been cremated, you usually scatter their ashes to the winds and there's not much of them to cling on to anymore.

Well, not any longer.

Because someone now devised a way to make coffee mugs out of human ashes.



(Picture: M. Capps & A. Haywood/Solent News)

(Picture: M. Capps & A. Haywood/Solent News)

Justin Crowe, 28, founded Chronical Cremation Designs after he found success with an art project called Nourish – which used the ashes of 200 anonymous individuals collected from bone dealers to create dinnerware.

The New Mexico-based artist is now taking orders from people who want mugs, plates and bowls made from their loved ones' ashes.

'Remembering a person through observing a picture or a cremation urn seemed distant and lonely,' says Justin.

(Picture: Chronicle Cremation Designs/Youtube)

'I wanted to create memorial objects that could be interacted with on a daily basis, integrating their memory back into the home and into daily life.'

Despite this sounding like Halloween being taken too far, Justin says that he's had 'overwhelming interest' in the products since they were made available to over earlier this month.



As you might imagine, reactions to the idea have been polarised, with some apparently threatening to have Justin investigated.

Nourish dinner ware is made using human ashes



‘The biggest challenge was navigating how to talk about a highly sensitive topic without overshadowing the conversation with a product that was at risk of seeming unnecessarily sensational .

And like a true brand ambassador, Justin drinks from one of the coffee mugs himself.

‘We understand that our process might come across as surprising or unconventional, but our products provide a unique opportunity for people to surround themselves with the memory of someone they loved.

‘We are reminded of the value of what we do every day by the individual people who are moved by the objects we’ve created.’

Customers who order custom dinnerware from Chronicle Cremation Designs receive a collection kit in which they put about 100g of ashes.

They then send the kit back to Justin who adds a glaze mixture which melts into glass while being fired in a kiln.



A coffee mug made with ashes of a loved one who has died. credit: Chronicle Cremation Designs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IW2YpfgK_d0

(Picture: M. Capps & A. Haywood/Solent News)

It's not given away however.

It costs $399 (£326) to create the ashy glaze, and that can be used on up to 25 products – ranging from $159 (£130) for jewellery to $549 (£448) for centerpiece bowls.

A humble coffee mug costs just $199 (£163).

So, you now know what to do with your grandparents… if you think they'd be into that sort of thing.



(Picture: M. Capps & A. Haywood/Solent News)

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The Candy-Poisoning Jokesters Who Terrorized 1980s Japan

atlasobscura.com

The "Mystery Man with 21 Faces" mocked the police ruthlessly and stocked Japan's supermarkets with cyanide-filled candy. To this day, no one knows who they were.

by Cara Giaimo
October 03, 2016



By now, everyone knows there's no such thing as poisoned Halloween candy. No chemically laced chewing gum. No razor blades hidden in caramel apples. Researchers have spent years debunking this urban legend, which, they say, was born from a certain strain of cultural anxiety—fear of strangers, of uncertainty, of too much sugar. Almost certainly, the cruelest thing a neighbor will do to your trick-or-treating kid is hand them a toothbrush.

But about 30 years ago, across much of Japan, this irrational, deep-seated fear actually came true. Over the course of a year and a half, a cryptic group blackmailed the country's biggest candy companies. They filled supermarket shelves with cyanide-laced chocolates. They wrote elaborate, teasing letters detailing their exploits, which were published in national newspapers. They consistently foiled the nation's police force. And to this day, no one has any idea who they were.

They called themselves the "Mystery Man with 21 Faces," and they replaced a whole country's sugar highs with a rush of terror.



On March 18th, 1984, Katsuhisa Ezaki came home from a long day at the office, took off his suit, and sunk into a warm bath. Ezaki was coming up on two years as the president of Ezaki Glico, a multimillion-dollar corporation based in Osaka. The company sold everything from ice cream to hamburger meat, but was most famous for its sweets—Pucchin Puddings, Pocky chocolate, and Glico caramels, made with health-boosting oyster glycogen.

Ezaki had only been soaking for a few minutes when he heard a brief commotion elsewhere in the house. Suddenly, two armed, hooded men burst into the bathroom and began dragging him out of the tub. Ezaki cried out for help, but his assailants were two steps ahead of him—they had already tied up Ezaki's wife and daughter and cut the house's phone lines, and they had even broken into the house next door, where his mother lived, and tied her up, too. The men muscled Ezaki out the door, gave him a coat and a ski hat, and brought him to an isolated, anonymous warehouse.

The next day, as police scrounged for some sign of their whereabouts, a ransom note was found in a nearby phone booth, demanding a billion yen (about $4.3 million in 1984 US dollars) and 220 pounds of gold bullion. Detectives were just starting to chase down leads when, after two days in captivity, Ezaki managed to escape his warehouse prison. Everyone hoped that the perpetrators would be caught, and that that would be the end of it.

It wasn't. It was only the beginning.



Three weeks later, newspaper offices across Japan received copies of a strange letter. "To the stupid police," it began. "Are you idiots?... If you were pros, you would catch us. Because you guys have such a high handicap, we're gonna give you some hints."

The letter went on to give more details about the crime—the getaway car was gray, the food they purchased was from Daiei Supermarket, one of the largest chains in Japan. "Should we also kidnap the head of the prefectural police?" it wondered. The missive was signed *kaijin nijuichi menso*—which translates, roughly, to "The Mystery Man with 21 Faces."

The newspapers published the letter. Over the next few months, they published its follow-ups, too: there were dozens of them, filled with taunts, jokes, and more useless clues. Some served mostly to goad the police. Others revealed further potential crimes: in one, sent in mid-May, the gang alleged that they had laced several packages of Glico candy with cyanide. They didn't specify which kind.

Glico immediately recalled all of its candy—which tested negative for cyanide—but they couldn't rescue their reputation. The frightened citizens of Japan engaged in a de facto Glico boycott. "Typical of the nationwide concern was a Tokyo office worker who gave her colleagues a gift of chocolates, attaching a reassuring note that another candymaker had produced them," the *New York Times* wrote. The company's assets plunged, and they had to lay off 1,000 workers.

While Glico's reputation foundered, its media-savvy tormenters grew more and more infamous. As anthropologist Marilyn Ivy explains in "Tracking the Mystery Man with 21 Faces," the gang named themselves after the "Mystery Man with the 20 Faces"—a villainous, shapeshifting thief invented by popular detective novelist Edogawa Rampo. "In every neighborhood and in every house wherever two or more people are gathered," Edogawa wrote, introducing the character, "they talk about the mystery man with the 20 faces, just as naturally as if they would talk about the weather."



This new gang of Mystery Men also captured the public imagination, even as they themselves evaded capture. Their letters and tactics were theatrical and morbidly fascinating. They would demand huge amounts of cash, and then fail to turn up to collect it. (There is no evidence that they ever accepted any money.) Once, they instructed Glico employees to appear at a particular phone booth at a certain time to await a message—but when disguised police showed up instead, they didn't call.

"You thought you could fool us, dressed up in your nice businessmen's blue suits, acting like salary men," they wrote the next day. "But those shifty eyes gave you away." Somehow, they had been watching. "We do not recall a case in which criminals have made such fools of the police," the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* wrote in an editorial.

Their letters were also written in a dialect associated with Osaka, Japan's third largest city, which is seen as an unpretentious anti-capital. Compared with the formality of standard Japanese, says Ivy, Osaka slang left room for warmth, sincerity, and humor. The city has been associated with comedy for more than 1,000 years, and many of Japan's most well-known comedians hail from Osaka.

"By writing in this dialect, the authors displaced the often murderous intent of their words into the realm of the lucid," she writes. In other words, when Japanese citizens opened their papers and read the latest threat from

the Mystery Man with 21 Faces, a certain subtext also got across: Why so serious?

In June of 1984, in a letter addressed "to our fans throughout Japan," the Mystery Man announced that they would lay off Glico. "The president of Glico has already gone around with his head hanging down long enough," they wrote. "We would like to forgive him." They also got in a few final jabs at the candy company ("In our group there's also a 4-year-old kid—every day he cries for Glico... It's a drag to make a kid cry cause he's deprived of the candy he loves") and at the police ("The police have done a good job—hang in there and don't give up!").

Finally, they made a promise: "Japan has gotten terribly hot and humid," they asserted. "So when our 'work' is done, we want to go to Europe—Geneva, Paris, London—we'll be in one of those places… Let's bring Pocky—the traveler's friend! Delicious Glico products—we're eating them too! See you in January of next year!"



But the Mystery Man returned long before that. In September, they called up Morinaga, another long-standing candy company, and demanded $400,000. Morinaga didn't comply. So on October 8, 1984, Japan's newspapers got yet another letter:

"To moms throughout Japan:
In autumn, when appetites are strong, sweets are really delicious.
When you think sweets—no matter what you say—it's Morinaga.
We've added some special flavor.
The flavor of potassium cyanide is a little bitter.
It won't cause tooth decay, so buy the sweets for your kids.
We've attached a notice on these bitter sweets that they contain poison. We've put twenty boxes in stores from Hakata to Tokyo."

Police swarmed grocery stores in and around the cities of Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, and Tokyo, scouring shelves for poisoned candy. Sure enough, they found boxes of Morinaga Choco Balls and Angel Pies with extra labels —"Danger, contains poison. You'll die if you eat this. The mystery man with 21 faces." This time, the candy actually *did* test positive for cyanide.

Immediately, Morinaga's stock dropped 22 cents. Further letters promised that if supermarkets didn't immediately begin boycotting Morinaga, future boxes would appear, this time unlabeled. "It's going to be like a treasure hunt," the Mystery Man said.

The police mobilized like never before. Noting that the Mystery Man tended to strike on Saturdays and Sundays, 40,000 officers—20 percent of Japan's entire force—spent several weekends in a row staking out supermarkets. They pored over surveillance video from one of the grocery stores, which showed a man with curly hair, a baseball cap, and glasses placing something on a shelf. They traced the provenance of the typewriter on which the letters were written. They released audio from the blackmailing telephone call to Morinaga, which featured a woman and child demanding money, and even set up special phone lines so that people could call in and listen to it.

But every lead went cold—and led to more mockery. "Isn't the man in the video a splendid chap?" one follow-up letter read, before comparing his appearance to several well-known police captains. After a failed stakeout in Shiga Prefecture yielded a van full of strange equipment—a vacuum cleaner, a floppy hat, wire cutters—the Mystery Man with 21 Faces wrote again, promising "you won't be able to trace us from anything we leave behind."

They kept demanding money from candy companies: 100,000,000 yen from Fujiya Co., 50,000,000 from Surugaya. In August of 1985, Shoji Yamamoto, the head of the Shiga Prefecture police—who blamed himself

and his subordinates for failing to capture the Mystery Man during the stakeout—doused his body with kerosene and lit himself on fire.

This was too much even for the Mystery Man. Five days later, they sent out their last letter. "No-career Yamamoto died like a man," it read, in part. "So we decided to give our condolence. We decided to forget about torturing food-making companies… We are bad guys. That means we've got more to do other than bullying companies. It's fun to lead a bad man's life. Mystery Man with 21 Faces." With that, they disappeared.



Over the next few years, police continued to search for clues, and to haul in suspects. Some leads pointed to the infamous Yakuza mobs. Others suggested extreme left-wing or right-wing groups, or North Korean communists. All told, the police investigated 125,000 people, and followed up on 28,300 public tips. But nothing illuminating was found, and everyone's alibis checked out.

In 1995, the statute of limitations ran out on Ezaki's kidnapping. In 2000, it expired on the poisoned candy case. As Michael Newton notes in *The Encyclopedia of Unsolved Crimes*, "Even if identified today, [the Mystery Man with 21 Faces] and his various accomplices could not be charged or tried."

And so, their 21 faces still intact, the Mystery Man lives on—in minds that recall their missives, in hands that hesitate before reaching for a piece of Pocky. Because they could be anyone, they're everyone. Because they could strike anywhere, they're everywhere. As they themselves wrote in one letter, midway through their reign of terror:

> *"Who are we? Sometimes a policeman, sometimes a violent gang… Sometimes a factory hand, sometimes a kidnapper… but our true identity is… The Mystery Man with the 21 Faces!"*

And that is all we may ever know.

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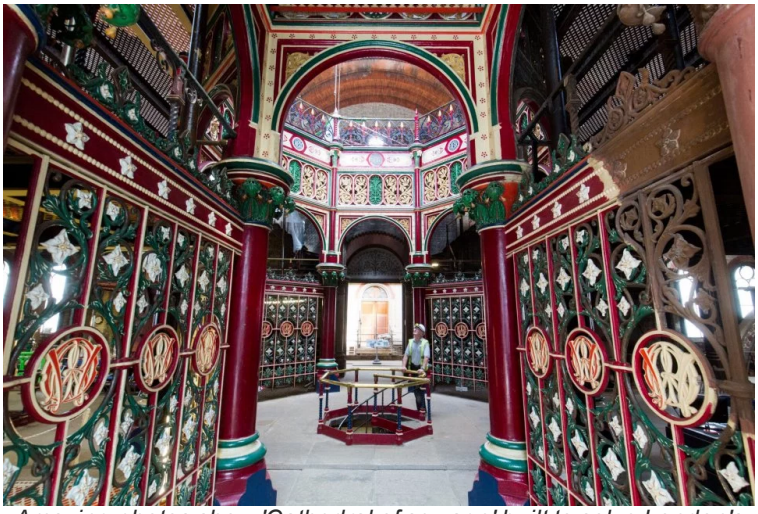
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Amazing photos show 'Cathedral of sewage' built to solve London's 1858 Great Stink

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Jen Mills for Metro.co.ukMonday 15 Aug 2016 3:18 pm



Amazing photos show 'Cathedral of sewage' built to solve London's 1858 Great Stink

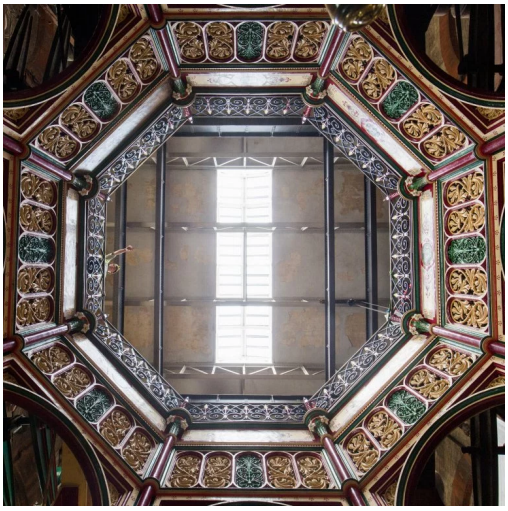
It was created to deal with one of the most disgusting episodes of London's history: The 'Great Stink' of 1858.

But Crossness Pumping Station itself is a thing of beauty, hidden among the capital's streets.

The Victorian building is so stunning it has been dubbed the 'Cistern Chapel', and it has just opened to the public as a museum.

Back in the 19th century, it was built in a desperate attempt to cure the 1958 'Great Stink' – when warm weather and filthy drinking water created a horrible smell across most of London and led to typhoid and cholera epidemics.

The stench from the Thames itself, which many believed to cause the diseases, plagued the City continuously. It was so bad, that high-ranking government officials were forced to soak their parliamentary curtains in lime chloride, to mask the odour.



(Picture: SWNS)

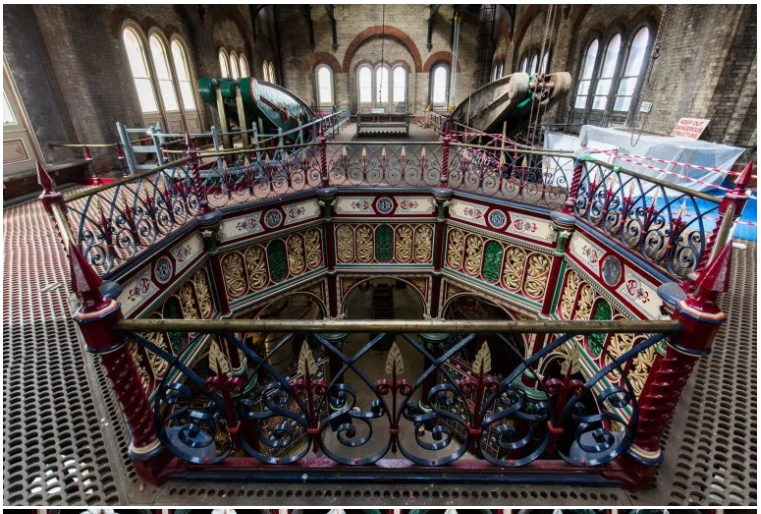
But in 1865, engineer Joseph Bazalgette unveiled a complex new modern sewage system, which used steam engines to pump the capital's waste into a 27 million gallon reservoir – enough to fill 49 Olympic swimming pools.

The sewage then remained in the reservoir, concealed from the public, until high tide, when it was released into the Thames and carried out to sea.

The steam-powered above-ground pumping station, built in Bexley, south east London, successfully solved London's foul stench, and continued to pump waste away from London for almost a century.

But in 1956, a new sewage treatment plant was built along the Thames, prompting the station's closure.

It then fell into a state of disrepair, became a victim of vandalism and was all but forgotten – until now.







Your supermarket delivery is increasing the levels of toxic air in London

Now members of the public with a nose for history, can learn about the Great Stink at the station.

Thanks to a volunteering project spanning almost twenty years and around £2.7m in grants, visitors to the station can nibble on cookies and sip tea, while learning about how London rid itself of its smelliest period in history.

Along with the station's steam engines, the 19th century multi-hued ironwork has also been restored to its former glory.

And designated 'public steaming days', allow visitors to see one of the four engines, the Prince Consort, in action.

As the only original engine, which has been restored to operational use, the Prince Consort was restarted during a 2003 ceremony by Prince Charles.

Volunteers from all different backgrounds, including electricians, artists and engineers, collaborated on the £2.7m restoration, paid for with Heritage Lottery Funding.

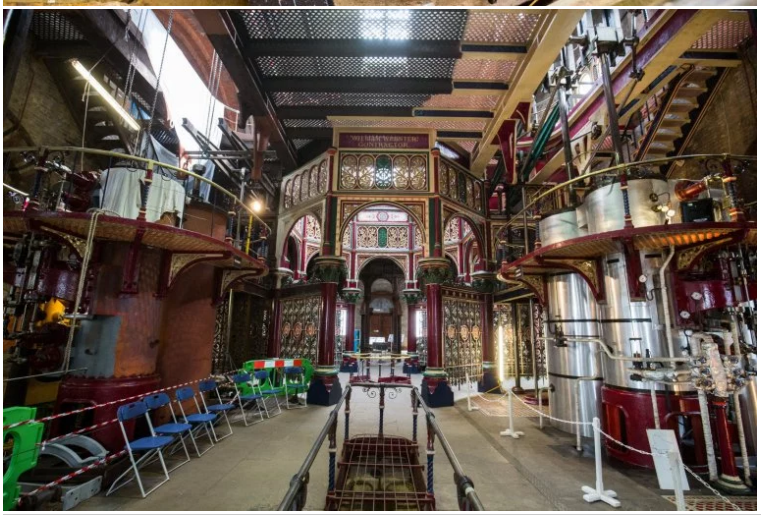
A new visitor centre opened last month, but the team are now looking for raise extra money to completely finish the restoration of the station.

So… Proof that you can't polish a turd but you can roll it in glitter?

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Crows go on rampage in Hull because they can't get their McDonald's fix

metro.co.uk

Richard Hartley-Parkinson for Metro.co.ukTuesday 18 Oct 2016 8:22 am



People say crows have become more aggressive after McDonald's closed for refurbishment (Picture: SWNS)

A branch of McDonald's has been closed in Hull and it appears to have had an unexpected effect on the city's population of crows.

People believe they are turning violent because they are unable to get their McDonald's fix.

They claim the lack of scrap food is making the black pests more aggressive as they turn on themselves and other birds such as pigeons for nutrition.

The owner of one business at Kingston Retail Park in Hull said he found a dead pigeon which had been killed by crows.

Paul Rymer said: 'We came into work one morning to find a pigeon all mangled and being pecked at by two crows.



A murder of crows is believed to be behind a slaughter of pigeons (Picture: SWNS)

'They were both standing over it and we obviously scared them away.

'When you get something like McDonald's shutting for a few weeks it's what happens, but there's a lot of related problems down here with pigeon mess and litter that need to be sorted.

'Something should be done about them.'

Other business owners believes that the crow problem, which includes an increasing number of the birds appearing, said issues with the animals pre-dates the fast food chain closure.

Phil Storey said: 'It's been pretty bad round here for a year now.

'It's a particular problem because of the litter. Nobody knows what a bin looks like these days.

They appear to have a penchant for McDonald's (Picture: SWNS)



‘They seem to be attacking pigeons and each other. It’s not really putting anyone off coming down here, but it can be a bit intimidating for old people and children.’

Wildlife expert Tim Cockerill described crows as among ‘the most intelligent species’ around but said they did not generally feed on larger birds.

He said: ‘It’s quite likely that in this case the crows were scavenging on the pigeon rather than having killed it.

‘But they are very, very clever and if they see an opportunity to get something they will exploit it completely.

‘They don’t really cause any problems for humans, but there are other similar black birds that they get mistaken for, that can do.’

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Oklahoma mother charged with using crucifix to kill 'possessed' daughter

yahoo.com

REUTERS August 30, 2016

Reuters



**

(Reuters) - A 49-year-old Oklahoma woman has been charged with first-degree murder on suspicion of killing her daughter whom she thought was possessed by the devil by jamming a crucifix down her throat and beating her, court records released on Tuesday showed.

Juanita Gomez was booked last week in the death of Geneva Gomez, whose body was found in an Oklahoma City home with a large cross on her chest, a probable cause affidavit said.

Local media said the daughter was 33 years old.

No lawyer was listed for Gomez in online jail records.

Police said Gomez confessed to the crime, telling officers she forced a crucifix and religious medallion down her daughter's throat until blood came out.

"Juanita saw her daughter die and then placed her body in the shape of a cross," the affidavit said.

Gomez was being held without bond at the Oklahoma County jail.

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By Dana Matthews on 08/07/2016

weekinweird.com



Week In Weird

The Curse Of Julia Brown: Manchac Swamp's Voodoo Priestess Haunts Louisiana After Killing a Whole Town



julia-brown

The mysteries and legends that surround Louisiana's infamous Manchac Swamp are deeply rooted in its past, making the dense forest one of the state's most famous haunts. Not only does Manchac Swamp have direct ties to Rougarou, Cajun werwolves of legend, it's also said to be haunted by the ghost of voodoo priestess Julia Brown, who used her powers to destroy an entire town.

Julia Brown was a well-respected magic practitioner in her small town of Frenier, Louisiana. If someone got sick they had two options – they could make the journey into New Orleans, or they could turn to Julia for a supernatural healing. It wasn't uncommon for Julia to travel around the village performing rituals to help with childbirth, fight off infections, and cure illnesses, and more often than not, the afflicted would recover quickly. By all accounts, whatever strange powers Julia was harnessing – they worked.



Chippokes_Plantation_-_Cypress_Swamp

Though the townsfolk respected Julia, they also began to take her for granted. When she started to feel as if her neighbors were using her, many of them demanding her help without asking, Julia Brown developed a bit of a mean streak, and began scaring the ungrateful locals by predicting when terrible things were about to happen to them. Whether she was foretelling future events or placing a curse, it seemed that Julia always knew when something bad was coming to the town of Frenier.

On September 28, 1915, Julia made her final terrifying prediction.. and then dropped dead. In the final weeks leading up to her death she was often heard singing, "One day I'm gonna die, and I'm gonna take all of you with me," over and over again.

The entire town gathered at Julia's funeral hoping that the show of attention would help her soul rest easy, but unfortunately for them, it appeared to have the opposite effect. Julia Brown was true to her word. As the nails were hammered into her coffin, a sudden and unusually devastating hurricane ripped through the entire village, leaving only two citizens left alive. Hundreds of people died during the storm, in fact, so many were lost that locals claim it's still common for skeletons to surface today, only to drift down the muggy swamp.

The force of the hurricane was felt all over Southern Louisiana, and claimed over 350 lives. One former resident, who was lucky enough to have left Manchac Swamp during the storm, recounted his experience from New Orleans.



swamp-169168_960_720



2307321_1f336706

"The water was washin' in the front door. We thought we were gone. All the camps down there gone. On the big lake, that had big timber, big cypress timber, it was just like a break boar went along there. I'll bet that storm blowed ever bit a hundred and twenty or thirty miles an hour. You could hear it come across the South Pass when it hit our place – just like a freight train."

Over the years, countless developers have tried to rebuild the area, but the only thing that remains on the island where Julia Brown's village once stood is a mass grave where the dead were buried. As you can imagine, the entire island now has a reputation for being an insanely active paranormal hot spot, where hundreds of people have experienced unexplainable activity, including the sound of a ghostly voice singing Julia's infamous song.

In 2009, the A&E special *Extreme Paranormal* visited the swamp in an attempt to capture its paranormal activity on camera, followed by the SyFy series *Haunted Highway* in 2013. In both episodes, the teams believed they caught substantial evidence of the unexplained on camera.

Julia Brown might not have been Louisiana's most famous Voodoo Priestess, but she certainly made a huge impact both during and after her life. Today, those willing to brave the waters of Manchac Swamp can sign up for a boat tour that takes curious investigators to the island, though judging by the destruction Julia caused the last time she was in a bad mood, I can't imagine it's a very good idea.

Have you ever taken a tour to Julia Brown's infamous grave? Let us know in the comments below. If you're looking for even more weird news, follow us on Twitter at @WeirdHQ or like us on Facebook.

Dana Matthews

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The Curse Of The Hexham Heads? - Paranormal Encounters

paranormal-encounters.com

By
Andrew
– April 20, 2012**Posted in:**ParanormalThe Occult



The mysterious Hexham heads

The discovery of two hewn stoneheads in a garden in Hexham seemed to worth no particular attention at the beginning. But then a nightmare began because the heads were probably the reason for paranormal phenomena and caused the frightful appearance of a werewolf-man.

Hexham is a borough in the valley of the Tyne, 32 kilometers far from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Here, one afternoon in February 1972, the 11 year old Colin Robson weeded the garden behind the house of his parents. In doing so, he found a round stone in the size of a tennis ball with a mysterious lead on one side. When he removed the earth, he discovered rough carven human traits on the stone; the lead was actually the throat.

Full of joy he called his younger brother Leslie to come. Together, the both boys continued to search and soon Leslie found a second head.

The stones, which were called the Hexham-heads, represent two different types. The first was similar to a skull and seemed to bear male traits; it was called “boy”. The stone was of a greenish grey and glittered with quartz crystals. It was very heavy, heavier than cement or concrete. The hair seemed to run in stripes from front to back. The other head, the “girl” was similar to a witch. It had wild pop-eyes and the hair was tied back to some knot. In the hair, traces of yellow and red colour could be found.

After they have dug up the heads, the boys took them into the house. Thereby, the whole disaster commenced. The heads turned round without reason, objects broke to pieces without evident cause. When the mattress of one of the two daughters of the Robsons was dotted with broken glass, the girls moved out of the room. In the meantime, a mysterious flower bloomed at Christmas exactly on that spot, where the heads were found. Besides, a strange light was glowing there.

It could be stated that the events at the Robsons have nothing to do with the appearance of the heads but deals with poltergeist-phenomena, which has been evoked by the adolescent children of the Robsons. Nevertheless, the neighbour of the Robsons, Ellen Dodd, had such a frightful experience, that cannot be explained easily. Later on, Mrs. Dodd said a being on all fours had carefully touched her at the legs. It has been half man, half sheep. Mrs. Robson remembered that in the same night she has heard a cracking sound and screams next door. Her neighbours told her that those sounds derived from a being that looked like a werewolf.

Dr. Anne Ross, a significant expert of the Celtic culture, stated that the heads would be approximately 1800 years old and were originally used during Celtic head-rituals. The apparitions

stopped after the heads has left the house.

In 1972, the story took a new turn, when truck driver Desmond Craigie stated that the “Celtic” heads were only 16 years old and that he has manufactured them as toys for his daughter Nancy. Astonishingly, the age of the heads could not be determined even with the help of a scientific analysis.

When the heads really stem from the Celtic epoch, it can be easily imagined that an ancient curse weighs on them. But when they are not old, how can it be explained that they evoke paranormal phenomena? It exists a theory that mineral art products can store visual pictures of humans from which they have been created. It is supposed that localities and objects can take up information that can cause particular phenomena. The scientist Dr. Robins was also interested in the reports about the sounds that are said to have been occured in connection with the heads. He pointed to a parallel of a being from the ancient Nordic mythology, the “Wulver”. He was powerful and dangerous but benevolent towards human people as long as they did not provoke him. Dr. Robins was so fascinated by the heads that he intended to take them home with him. When he laid them in his car to drive home and turned the ignition key, all electronical appliances on the dashboard failed. He took a look at the heads and commanded them: “Stop with that!” – and the car started.

The present whereabouts of the Hexham-heads are not known. But it cannot be doubted that they really caused the phenomena which are similar to those that are usually attributed to poltergeists. They functioned in some form as a trigger. But why? This leads to the question of their age. Are they of Celtic origin as Dr. Ross has stated or have they been recently manufactured in 1956 by a Hexham-inhabitant for his daughter? The theory of Dr. Robins says: When an object is in the position to cause poltergeist-phenomena, so it does not depend on who has manufactured it but “where” it had been manufactured.

Source: http://www.profilingtheunexplained.com/ghosts_and_hauntings/hexham_heads_curse.html/

1. The Hexham Heads: Fact or Fiction? | Fortean Folly

Designed By Fat Wombat Designs

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The Ghosts and Monsters of the Cursed Griffith Park



hollywood

October 4, 2016

A nearly 150-year-old curse, werecreatures, a haunted picnic table, and the most famous suicide in Hollywood history, all within Griffith Park. Is it a magnet for corpses and ghosts? You decide.

Griffith Park sure does draw the bodies, usually alive, but all too often not. (In 1990, the LA Times reported that ten dead bodies were found in the park in a two year period.) Sometimes the bodies were found intact (including victims of the Hillside Strangler), other times in pieces.
(including the decapitated head found near the Hollywood sign in 2012 – additional limbs were found strewn in other parts of park.)

Let's begin with a look at the alleged curse that may be behind all the evil afflicting Griffith Park, and then dive into some of the more recent ghost stories and alleged supernatural activity.

The Curse

The most well known legend of Griffith Park, and the one most ghost sightings are attributed to, is the curse Dona Petronilla placed on the land in 1863. After learning that her uncle, wealthy land baron Don Antonio Feliz, had not bequeathed the property to her, the seventeen-year-old "shouted out vexatiously that the cattle and fields would become diseased and die; and that no one will ever profit from this land." As for the land's new owner, and the man who helped with the acquisition, Peronilla swore, ""the one shall die in an untimely death and the other in blood and violence."

Her violent proclamation may not have been merely out of spite, as there is some debate whether the ailing Feliz overlooked Petronilla of his own volition, or was taken advantage of while on his deathbed.

Regardless, until this day the land is plagued by disastrous wildfires, and many of the Angelenos associated with the land befell tragic fates. According to Michael Imlay, an expert on the curse and it's fallout, C.V. Howard, who negotiated sale of the land's water rights, was shot dead in a local saloon. A subsequent owner was killed by banditos on a trip to Mexico. And, of course, there was Colonel Griffith J. Griffith, who the curse was most determined to afflict.

Griffith purchased the land in 1882, and almost from the beginning, Petronilla made her fury known. In his book, The Ghost Hunter's Guide to Los Angeles, Jeff Dwyer writes:

> …droughts, fires, and other disasters… a violent storm swept across the L.A. basin, stripping away the vegetation from the rancho and killing much of the livestock. During the storm, several people saw the ghost of Dona Petranilla drifting about, renewing her curse.

Then, in 1891, Griffith managed to survive after business rival shot him with a shotgun outside of the Old Calvary Cemetery (now a high school on N. Broadway). It was too much for Griffith to handle, and beginning in 1896, he began giving large parcels of the land to the citizens of Los Angeles for free.

Petronilla's curse finally reared it's ugly head in 1903 when Griffith shot his wife at a Santa Monica hotel. She survived, but Griffith was sentenced to San Quentin for assault with a deadly weapon. Even though Griffith was reportedly a sober man, the course ascribed his crime as the result of "alcoholic insanity." The once mighty Griffith, ostracized from society, died in 1919 of liver disease. Petronilla was surely laughing in her grave.

Not surprisingly, the most frequent ghost sightings in Griffith Park are attributed to being Griffith, Petronilla, or Feliz.

The Ghost of Dona Petronilla is the most common, described as a young woman in a white dress, sometimes riding a white horse. At midnight, she is reportedly often seen in the Paco Feliz Adobe, "watching from the adobe's windows on dark and rainy nights," according to the website Weird California. The adobe is the oldest remaining structure in the park, and currently serves as the Crystal Springs Ranger Headquarters.

California folklorist Horace Bell wrote that in 1896, the **Ghost of Don Antonio Feliz** (Petronilla's uncle), appeared at a party celebrating the transfer of the land from Griffith to the city, shocking the previously celebratory guests. Feliz took a seat usually reserved for Griffith and proclaimed, "I come to invite you to dine with me in hell. In your great honor I have brought an escort of sub-demons." The lights went out and a cacophony of gongs and cymbals filled the room. There are no reports of whether or not the scene was an elaborate prank because, according to Bell, all of the guests fled before the demons would have arrived.

Feliz's ghost is reportedly still scene wandering his former ranchland on horseback, most often spotted near Bee Rock near the Old Zoo. It should also be noted that some people believe Bee Rock resembles the face of Dona Petronilla.

The **Ghost of Griffith J. Griffith** has often been spotted, also on horseback, checking on the upkeep of the land.

The Hollywood Sign

In 1932, distraught actress Peg Entwistle lept to her death from the H in the Hollywoodland sign. People staring at the sign after dark have reported seeing a young woman jumping from the H, vanishing before hitting the ground. Other sightings ascribed to Entwistle include those of a woman matching her description and period clothes wandering the parks trails, as well as walking up the path between the sign and her former residence on Beachwood Drive. The smell of gardenia, her


Actress Peg Entwistle.

perfume scent of choice, has been reported to linger near her spirit.

The Hollywood sign has two live webcams available to peek at 24/7 if you'd like to ghost hunt from the comfort of your home.

The Haunted Picnic Table

On the day before Halloween, 2006, a curious article appeared on the "L.A. Tirnes" website commemorating a freak accident that occurred 30 years earlier in a northwest corner of the park. A young couple, making love on a picnic bench off Mt. Hollywood Drive, were crushed by a falling tree. According to the story, a chain of workers hired to clear the tree fell sick or were injured before they could finish the job, including a supervisor who was found dead of an apparent heart attack at the scene. While the article has been dismissed as a hoax, sightings of a ghostly couple in the area persist, and people familiar with the tale have arranged pilgrimages to the site in the hopes of witnessing paranormal activity.

The Old Zoo

Laurie Stinchield, Pet Psychic, writes that when she and her film crew visited the old zoo grounds in July, 2010, she "buckled over in nauseau." She envisioned malnourished big game cats resorting to cannibalism, among other suffering animals:

> …a monkey accidentally hanging himself from spinning from psychosis, elephants with sore infected pussy feet, and a komodo dragon peering out of the darkness. Even the skeptics bow their heads. The suffering seems to stick to our breaths.

The Beast of Griffith Park

Whether it's a werewolf, a demon promised by Don Feliz, or a drug induced hallucination, there is a creature within Griffith Park that has rumored to exist over the past decades.

In October, 2005, three men allegedly retreated from a late night excursion into the park after an encounter with a beast that had green skin and red hair. Lirpa, the internet poster who shared the tale, said that she was visited by the men immediately after their experience. Perhaps to prove they weren't making the story up, she had the men each draw what they saw separately. With minor variations, she wrote that their sketches all matched what they'd described to her.

"Its legs were very long as well as its feet and it was talking huge strides as it made its way down the street," she wrote. "Its back was bent back and its neck was very long and was bent forward. They said no human could be bent like this thing was. Its eyes were black, but it did have the whites as well."

More recently, an 11 year old boy named Jack wrote on the "Weird CA" site that on a 2009 visit he was chased by "an unusually large coyote." Reaching the top of a hill, he saw another kid around his age, and warned him about the coyote. "I'm quite glad you warned me," the kid told Jack, then handed him an old firecracker. "Here, take this, its good luck." The kid then ran through some bushes and onto a small path. Fearing the coyote, Jack tried to follow him, but never caught up, and never saw the kid, or the coyote, again.

The Merry Go Round

Luis Alvarado, the Honorary Mayor of Griffith Park, reportedly encountered a ghost on two occasions by the merry go round. One night, while checking to help ensure all visitors had left the park at the sunset closing time, Alvarado watched as a man descended a staircase in the vicinity only to disappear when hitting the last step. Alvarado looked around to see if perhaps the man had disappeared into behind a tree, but could find no trace. A few nights later, Alvarado was spooked when the scene repeated itself.

The Observatory, Travel Town, and Points Between

According to Los Angeles ghost expert Richard Carradine, the number of reported ghost sightings at both Travel Town and the Observatory became so frequent that the city brought in experienced teams to investigate the source of the alleged paranormal activity. Even with the use of EVP monitors and other advanced equipment, they found nothing to explain the sightings.

Besides being a hotbed of supposed supernatural activity, Griffith Park has also attracted vagrants, gangs, and pranksters over the years. There are any number of explanations for the tragic events and unusual sightings over the years.

If you know of any other Griffith Park hauntings, or can contribute to the above, let us know and we'll look into the reports and possibly add them to the above. "Scare and balanced" is our motto. At CreepyLA, we'll continue to report what we hear.

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Man chops off big toe with bolt cutters and 'EATS it' in Wilko

12:30, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 13:48, 1 Nov 2016 By Chris kitching

mirror.co.uk

Wilko shopper sliced off big toe with bolt cutters and started EATING it in front of horrified shoppers



Keith Douglas / Alamy Stock Photo

The incident occurred in a Wilko shop in Sheffield

Shoppers looked on in horror as a man chopped off his big toe and started eating it in a city centre store.

Eyewitnesses said the man severed the toe from his foot with a pair of bolt cutters that he grabbed off a shelf in the electrical aisle.

Emergency services rushed to the branch of Wilko in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, after the sickening incident on Sunday morning.

They found the man with severe injuries to his foot and raced him to hospital where he is still receiving treatment.



Getty Images

Eyewitnesses said the man used bolt cutters to cut off his toe (file photo)

One eyewitness said: "A man went into Wilkinson's Haymarket, went upstairs to the electrical aisle, picked up some bolt cutters, chopped his big toe off and stood eating it.

"The aisle was taped off until police and forensics went."

South Yorkshire Police said: "Emergency services were called to a shop in Haymarket, Sheffield, at around 11.10am on Sunday following reports of concern for a man inside the premises.

"Upon officer arrival, the man was taken to hospital with injuries to his foot, where he remains.

"There are not believed to be any other parties involved. The incident is not being investigated as a crime."

A Wilko spokesperson confirmed that a "man caused self-injury" in an incident at its Sheffield Haymarket store on Sunday.

Workers "took swift action" to help the man and called emergency services.

The spokesperson added: "We thank our team members for their prompt action in dealing with a difficult situation and we have offered them support where needed.

"The area was cordoned off to safeguard our customers in the store and the police gave help and advice.

"The area affected has been thoroughly cleaned and we are trading normally again."

DailyMirror

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Cyclist is repeatedly 'clawed' by an angry magpie

08:26 EST, 11 November 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Note: They do this all the time but this guy had a gopro

- **Cyclist Brendan Edwards filmed a territorial magpie attacking him**
- **Bird swooped at him several times, hitting him in the head and shoulder**
- **Mr Edwards said he could fell the magpie's claws digging into his skin**

By Ollie Gillman For Daily Mail Australia

A cyclist claims he was repeatedly 'clawed' by an angry magpie near Melbourne.

Shocking footage shows the territorial bird swooping at Brendan Edwards several times as he rode through Pakenham, east of the city.

The magpie is seen attacking the cyclist and hitting him a number of times in the back of the head and shoulder as he tried to furiously pedal away.



Cyclist Brendan Edwards claims he was 'clawed' by an angry magpie as he cycled along a road

Mr Edwards eventually escaped and was unhurt, thanks to his helmet.

As he posted the video online, he said: 'You're riding along, minding your own business and then thwack.

'You feel the sharp dig of claws and wings against the back of your helmet, and there's a horrible dry scream right in your ear and you realise that a magpie has hit you from behind.'

He continued: 'The attack has come from nowhere and you're in a bit of disbelief and starting to feel terrified when thwack.

'You get hit this time from the side and you feel pain as a pair of sharp claws dig into your shoulder.

Running the magpie gauntlet is just another occupational hazard of riding on Australian roads during the spring time.'

Magpies, particularly males, are known to swoop at people to protect their nests and offspring during spring.

Shocking footage shows the territorial bird swooping at Mr Edwards several times as he rode through Pakenham, east of Melbourne

The magpie is seen attacking the cyclist and hitting him a number of times in the back of the head and shoulder as he tried to furiously pedal away

HOW DO YOU AVOID BEING SWOOPED BY A MAGPIE?

1. Walk quickly and carefully away from the area where the magpie is attacking.

2. Try to keep an eye on the bird while retreating. Magpies are less likely to swoop if you look directly at them. You can also try wearing your sunglasses on the back of your head, or drawing or sewing eyes onto the back of a hat.





3. Wear a bicycle or skateboard helmet. Any type of hat, even one made from an ice-cream container or cardboard box, will help protect you.

4. Carry an open umbrella, stick or small branch above your head, but do not swing it at the magpie as this will only provoke it to attack.

5. If riding a bicycle, dismount and wheel it quickly through the magpie's territory. Your helmet will protect your head. You can also attach a tall, red safety flag to your bicycle or hold a stick or branch, while some cyclists attach protruding cable ties to their helmets.

Source: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

Comments (

seismick, Birmingham, United Kingdom, 14 minutes ago

Should change the name to Peckenthem park

wotever1, Newcastle, Australia, about 9 hours ago

A cull of the rats with wings is required.

RocketJSquirrel, Brisbane, Australia, about 15 hours ago

Might be wise to consider that Magpies are a distant cousin to the T-Rex with all the associated lack of compassion that a Dinosaur Dynasty might have. The head and beak of bird does bear more than a passing resemblance to their ancestor.

RocketJSquirrel, Brisbane, Australia, about 22 hours ago

"Tee" magpie was close to starvation. In the real world, magpie numbers are kept in check by food supply.

RocketJSquirrel, Brisbane, Australia, about 22 hours ago

1% of magpies attack. There are three levels of event. Swoop without contact. Bump without drawing blood. Attack with violence by beak claw drawing blood. As magpies have a clutch of eggs about four replacements, then a cull of level three attacking birds will have no impact on numbers. Magpies in the wild are not fed off balconies and city magpies arrive on balconies and expect feeding, even when they have never been there or walk into a home find the kitchen expect to be fed. There are too many birds in too small an area with some bird stressing over lack of room. Apart from dosing with tranquilizers or moving birds to the bush with a doubling of numbers each year, four eggs remember, stressor of overcrowding due to free meals will continue. A visit to a farm with livestock told a different story. While having a steak sandwich, a mother magpie rather slim and scrawny "teenager" child magpie arrived. A piece of steak tossed at "mum" was passed onto the "teen".

RFR, near the gum tree, Australia, a day ago

I have been feeding magpies for a couple of years now and have watched their territorial attacks on other birds who have (tried) to join in on the food I throw out. They dive and attack and chase off the 'offending' bird - but only until the bird is OUT of their 'territory'. Going by these 'attack' film clips, you're inclined to think the attack goes on and on and on ... IT DOESN'T - they don't want to hurt you - they just want you out of their territory.

dlaura, Cambridge, United Kingdom, a day ago

Probably trying to tell him to use the cycle path.

Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd

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THP helicopter searches Dandridge for escaped inmate

DANDRIDGE, Tenn. (WVLT) -

local8now.com

By WVLT Staff |
Posted: Fri 11:20 PM, Nov 11, 2016 |
Updated: Sat 1:33 PM, Nov 12, 2016



The Tennessee Highway Patrol confirmed to Local 8 News that troopers were helping search for an inmate who escaped from the Jefferson County Detention Center around 7:58 p.m. Friday night.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office says Jeremy Ryan Archer escaped from the Jefferson County Work House around 8 p.m. on Friday night.

According the officials, Archer was spending time for Violation of Probation on previous charges of burglary of a vehicle, theft, and vandalism. Archer was being held in an isolated cell for breaking a sprinkler head off at the Jefferson County Justice Center.

According to officials, while they were escorting Archer to the bathroom in the back area of the Work House, he ran, opened a door and went across the fence in the back of the building and ran.

The THP helicopter was helping search by air, and multiple viewers in the Dandridge area told Local 8 News it was spotted behind Shoney's along Goose Creek Road and Highway 25/70.

Archer is described as 6'1", skinny, bald with tattoos on his face, beck and body. Anyone with information on his location, is asked to contact the sheriff's office at 865-397-9411 or dispatch at 865-475-3482.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office did not respond to requests for information.

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Daughter fears drug addict stole, ingested mother's ashes

yahoo.com

AP Asso Pres October 13, 2016

BROCKTON, Mass. (AP) — A woman whose mother's ashes were stolen from her car fears an addict stole and ingested them thinking they were drugs.

Carolyn Parker tells The Enterprise (http://bit.ly/2dN9z2t) of Brockton the ashes were in a plastic bag inside a small white box in her glove compartment. They were taken from her unlocked Jeep in Massachusetts on Monday.

She said the thief took only the ashes, leaving behind her expensive sunglasses, $20 in change and a gold chain hanging from her rearview mirror.

Her mother died in July at age 71. Parker had the ashes in her vehicle so she could spread them at her mother's favorite spots.

She says it's "mortifying" to think that someone may have ingested the ashes.

She's asking the thief to return them no questions asked.

___

Information from: The (Brockton, Mass.) Enterprise, http://www.enterprisenews.com

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Dead city treasurer wins re-election in California race

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 10, 2016

OCEANSIDE, Calif. (AP) — Voters in one California city have elected a dead man to office.

Official figures show that Oceanside City Treasurer Gary Ernst was re-elected Tuesday even though he died in September.

Ernst earned 17,659 votes and beat challenger Nadine Scott by about 6 percentage points.

There wasn't time to remove his name from the ballot after he died from diabetes complications.

Since he can't take office, the City Council can declare the seat vacant and decide to appoint someone to fill out the term or call a special election. A decision could be made next month.

Scott tells San Diego's KNSD-TV that she'd like to be appointed to the post to honor the more than 15,000 people who voted for her.

She says she doesn't think voters knew Ernst was dead.

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Pictured: Inside the house of horrors where Russian historian held birthday parties for 150 little girls he had dug up from their graves and mummified

- **Anatoly Moskvin exhumed 150 corpses of girls aged between three and 12**
- **He dressed decomposing bodies and skeletons in stockings and dresses**
- **Mummified the corpses, gave them names and even held birthday parties**
- **Macabre obsession was discovered when his parents visited him in 2011**
- **Footage of the house of horrors has emerged showing**
- **Judge says he is not fit to stand trial and must remain in psychiatric clinic**
- **WARNING: GRAPHIC CONTENT**

By JULIAN ROBINSON and JOHN HALL FOR MAILONLINE
PUBLISHED: 07:23 EST, 25 October 2014 | **UPDATED:** 05:51 EST, 26 October 2014

Footage has emerged of the house of horrors where a Russian historian held birthday parties for 150 little girls he had dug up from their graves and mummified.

Anatoly Moskvin, 46, from the city of Nizhny Novgorod in central Russia, was arrested in 2011 after it emerged he had dug up corpses of girls aged between three and 12.

He then took the bodies home and turned them into a grisly collection of mummies, dressing the bodies and skeletons in stockings and dresses and even making one look like a teddy bear.

A video made by Moskvin and found at his apartment by investigators showed a corridor cluttered with wedding dresses and bright, colourful clothes.

Scroll down for video

Site Web Enter your search

FEMAIL TODAY

Battle of the booties! Beyonce, Kim Kardashian and Nicki Minaj put their dramatic curves on show as they dominate the MTV VMAs red carpet



'I'd like to thank my beautiful daughter!' Beyonce slays the MTV VMAs with Video Of The Year win... after incredible 16-minute Lemonade performance



It's not Halloween! Farrah Abraham, Cassie, and Stella Maxwell lead the worst dressed at the MTV VMAs with eye-popping costumes
Outrageous outfits



Calvin Harris snubs ex Taylor Swift as he wins Best Male Video at MTV VMAs for This Is What You Came For... the song she co-wrote
No mention of her



It's all about Kim! Kanye West watches proudly as his Kardashian wife shows off her incredible post-baby figure at MTV Video Music Awards



Simone Biles and the Final Five meet Kim Kardashian and Beyonce at MTV VMAs - but Gabby Douglas misses out after being admitted to hospital



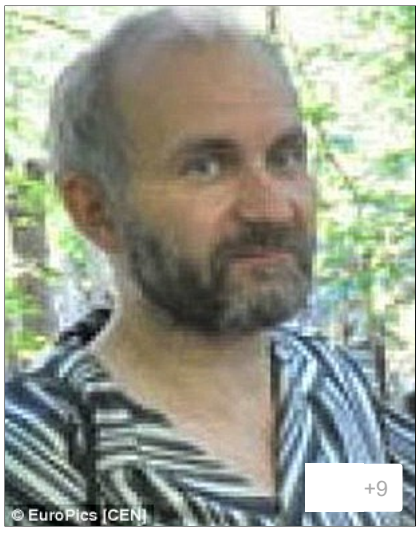
Who needs maternity wear! Nev Schulman's heavily pregnant fiancee Laura Prelongo goes topless as they pose in matching looks at MTV VMAs



All hail the queen! Beyonce stuns in a skintight bodysuit as she delivers powerful 16 MINUTE rendition of



Disturbing footage has emerged of the inside of Anatoly Moskvin's house in Nizhny Novgorod, central Russia





Sick: Anatoly Moskvin, 46, from the city of Nizhni Novgorod in central Russia, was arrested in 2011 after it emerged he had dug up at least 150 corpses of young girls aged between three and 12



In a room the camera zoomed in on the girls' faces and some of them were wrapped in light beige fabric

Lemonade hits at the MTV VMAs





Beyonce's VMA Formation: Star gets political as dancers get 'shot' during charged performance after leading the mothers of gun violence victims

Michael Phelps and fiance Nicole hit the red carpet for the VMAs where he reveals what track he was listening to when he gave rival Chad le Clos death stare



Britney Spears glitters in gold and dances up a storm in long-awaited return to MTV VMA stage (but shame about the lip-syncing)
It has been 10 years



My little angel! Heavenly Beyonce dresses Blue Ivy in an $11,000 princess dress for her very first red carpet at the MTV VMAs
Sharing the spotlight



'I see you Amber!' Kanye West gives shout out to ex and Kim's sex tape partner Ray J in rambling speech... and of course takes a dig at Taylor Swift



'Do I want to bang a cat now?' Key and Peele sum up the reaction to Kanye West's bizarre new video which premiered at the VMAs
He send fans into a spin



Now that's an X-rated gym class! Nicki Minaj and Ariana Grande simulate lewd act during sporty themed performance live on MTV



Kim Kardashian crosses her fingers as Best Male Video is announced... but can't hide her disappointment as Kanye West misses out to Calvin Harris

'I slathered bronzer everywhere': Kim Kardashian's make-up artist reveals how he created her Greek goddess beauty look for



The video was made by Moskvin and found at his apartment by investigators, it has been reported



Police said Moskvin compiled up-to-date information about the lives of each girl he had dug up and printed off instructions on a computer for how to produce dolls out of human remains

It shows the bodies sitting around his house in a series of bizarre costumes.

This week a judge revealed that Moskvin was not mentally fit to stand trial and should remain in a psychiatric clinic.

Moskvin, who speaks 13 languages and was described in court as a 'genius', gave the mummified corpses names and organised birthday parties for them. All of little girls had died years earlier.

RELATED ARTICLES


Class 3C here are my bones! Romanian headteacher donates


Indiana body count rises to SEVEN as police fear 'Backpage'...

In one room the camera zoomed in on the girls' faces, wrapped in light beige fabric.

A voiceover on the video said: 'These dolls are made of mummified human remains.'

Police said Moskvin also compiled up-to-date information about the lives of each girl he had dug up and printed off instructions on a computer for how to produce dolls out of human remains.

Russian grave-robber who dug up the graves of 150 little girls

the 2016 MTV VMAs





Brother love! Nick and Joe Jonas get matching arrow tattoos ahead of their big moments on stage at MTV VMAs
They hit the stage with some new ink

She's ripped! Britney Spears flashes cleavage in eye-popping slashed LBD as she hints fan Kim Kardashian will be introducing her at MTV VMAs



Sheer daring! Hailey Baldwin proudly flaunts model figure in see-through black sequined jumpsuit at MTV VMAs
Hitting the white carpet



Not so Meek! Mill wraps his arms around girlfriend Nicki Minaj as she goes underwear free in figure-hugging blue dress at MTV VMAs
Turning heads



Diddy and Cassie walk red carpet separately at MTV VMAs despite getting back together following THAT explosive row
Didn't share the limelight



Cutting edge! Ashley Graham rocks a new shorter haircut as she wows in completely sheer gown at the MTV VMAs
Freshly cut tresses



'This is a breakthrough': Teresa Giudice and Jacqueline Laurita finally bury the hatchet on Real Housewives
Put it behind them



Jennifer Garner appears to wipe away tears as Ben Affleck glares at her in tense reunion after Montana getaway
So-called amicable exes

Comedians turn onto Ann Coulter with some VERY incendiary jokes on Comedy Central's roast originally aimed at Rob Lowe

0:00 / 1:06



His macabre obsession was discovered when his parents visited him after returning from holiday



The creepy footage showed a corridor cluttered with wedding dresses and bright, colourful clothes

Became the butt of jokes





Girl's gotta have fun! Kate Beckinsale sizzles in black as she and NBA star Chandler Parsons hit Hyde nightclub
They turned up at the night spot together

Tyga's rumoured ex Demi Rose shows off her ample assets and taut tummy in very sexy bikini snaps as she holidays in Hong Kong
Tanned beauty



Red hot! Ashley Graham puts on very busty display in a skintight plunging dress at Sports Illustrated Festival
Eye-popping outfit



Model passenger! Megan Blake Irwin looks fresh-faced as she jets into Sydney following rumored fling with Scott Disick
Back in Australia



Is it because everyone already knows how it ends? Obama movie recounting Barack and Michelle's first date is off to a slow start
Came out on Friday



Kerr-Ching! Supermodel Miranda Kerr sizzles in swimwear campaign and showcases her perfectly toned curves and pert posterior



Jennifer Aniston 'should blush with shame' over facial scrub adverts: Actress is criticized for endorsing product laced with microbeads



Bright spark! Hailee Steinfeld shows off her long legs and fit physique in a colorful mini dress at MTV VMAs
The singer showed off her svelte frame



Mixing it up! Amber Rose gets bold and busty in black lace bra with classic pantsuit at the MTV VMAs



This week a judge revealed that Anatoly Moskvin was not mentally fit to stand trial and should remain in a psychiatric clinic



Location: Anatoly Moskvin kept the bodies at his home in the Russian city of Nizhni Novgorod (pictured)

His macabre obsession was discovered when his parents visited him after returning from holiday.

A prosecutor spokesman said: 'After three years of monitoring him in a psychiatric clinic it is absolutely clear that Moskvin is not mentally fit for trial.

'He will therefore be kept for psychiatric treatment at the clinic.'

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The hilarious moment student sleeps behind studious portrait


Muslim women humiliated and ordered to LEAVE...

Never shy when it comes to showing off her figure




Thigh's the limit! Winnie Harlow shows off her long legs in revealing split gown as she joins Beyonce's entourage at the MTV VMAs


JWoww debuts post-baby body and Disney-themed tattoo sleeve alongside BFF Snooki at MTV VMAs
The network canceled the duo's reality series


Teen Mom 2's Jenelle Evans shows off baby bump for the first time since announcing pregnancy at MTV VMAs
The MTV Teen Mom 2 star hit the red carpet


She's still got it! Heidi Klum shows off mile-high legs in an intricate backless pink mini dress at MTV VMAs
The German-born model looked stunning


Stylishly solo! Ariana Grande shows off her ab-tastic physique as she heads to MTV VMAs without Mac Miller... but finally confirms they are dating


Naomi Campbell, 46, oozes youthful glamor in barely-there ensemble... as she risks wardrobe malfunction with risqué slashed gown
46-year-old beauty


Waiting to INHALE! Fifth Harmony's Ally Brooke squeezes into eye-watering corset as she wears bondage-inspired outfit to MTV VMAs


Racy Rita Ora flashes her lingerie through wildly sexy sheer gown adorned with feathers and fur as she hits MTV VMAs in New York
Wild style


That's one way to get attention! Frankie Grande leaps into the air as he bares his chest under black sparkling jacket at VMAs
New-found freedom

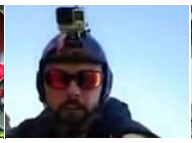

DJ Khaled is one proud dad as he rubs his fiancee Nicole Tuck's bump at the MTV Video Music Awards
The 40-year-old posed with his pregnant fiancee

'Beat that!' Tom Holland performs tough backflip while preparing for upcoming Spider-Man: Homecoming
The English actor showed his athletic side



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NIGE Trum

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The comments below have not been moderated.

MrsR, Medicine Hat, Canada, 1 year ago

Those poor parents.

Click to rate 71 2

delerious, london, United Kingdom, 1 year ago

this will be a movie in a couple years time i bet you

Click to rate 95 11

notouch, Cebu City, Philippines, 1 year ago

That is one crazy man.

Click to rate 57 5

Ken Mist, Paris, 1 year ago

Not sure what's worse. He has an excuse, that he is sick. The Mail chose to publish the pictures that is the lowest voyeurism

Click to rate 100 12

John Seb, London, United Kingdom, 1 year ago

That is beyond sick!

Click to rate 55 3

Paolo, london, Germany, 1 year ago

I find the stupid ironic comic framing of the clip quite distasteful whilst it attempts to portray the man as some kind of monster. You get the feeling the makers have contempt for the audience and communicate a message that has contempt for life itself. The man is obviously unwell but he has also harmed no one. Try reporting news and stories in an honest and sober fashion.

Click to rate 58 30

2 of 4 replies | See all replies

foxie, Washington State, United States, 1 year ago

Maybe in Germany, this is acceptable behaviour. But in the US and UK, there are many laws regarding violating a corpse. Taking away the moral and personal issues, there are many religions that would find this more than appalling and against their rules concerning how to treat the dead as well as violating their religious rituals of laying down someone in peace. To go against this morale compass is certainly psychological disturbing on many levels. To be more comfortable with the dead verses the living may be the first reason, that the person is not of sound mind. After your comment, of not being able to realize society's rules and the made laws to protect the dead, I have to wonder what treatment you might need to understand why this is legally, morally and religiously wrong.

Click to rate 28 15

Iriz, Langelsheim, Germany, 1 year ago

No, this is not acceptable behavior in Germany, Foxie.... This is the opinion of one man only. Please do not make it to be the opinion of 80 million people who have

Oh Buoy! Iggy Azalea and French Montana romance rumors heat up as they strip down on luxury yacht in Mexico
They have been enjoying each other's company



For one night only! Newly single Jennifer Lopez surprises ex-husband Marc Anthony as she joins him onstage for Spanish duet



Dazzling in designer! Princess Mary steps out in her favorite Dolce & Gabbana floral dress as she views a new royal portrait of herself
Australian-born royal



'It's better coming from him, otherwise I'm a real nag-athon': Model Elle Macpherson hired 'mannies' for sons so they would have 'strong male role models'



Is this the last summer bash at the Playboy mansion? No sign of 90-year-old Hef as his pajama-clad son hosts bevvy of beauties at recently-sold estate



Kim Mark II: Zolciak does her best Kardashian impression as she copies the queen of the belfie's famous swimsuit pose
Bootylicious physique



Kylie Jenner flashes her midriff in bra and mini skirt... after being banned from Tyga's Vegas club performance 'for being underage'
Daring ensemble



SEBASTIAN SHAKESPEARE: Life's just bootiful for Chelsy: Harry's ex spotted with a large plastic cast on her foot to protect a mystery injury



Gordon Ramsay fills up his new $200,000 Ferrari as he takes a drive around upscale Bel Air
He showed off his new Ferrari in Los Angeles

nothing to do with his comment! In Germany one is not even allowed to have the ashes of a deceased at home or scatter it anywhere outside of a graveyard, because the bodies of the deceased are considered holy. What this guy did, is sick. Period.

Click to rate 44 1

jobyjak, Leamington Spa, 1 year ago

This story was in The Telegraph 3 years ago.

Click to rate 42 8

Yorks15storeys, Sheffield, United Kingdom, 1 year ago

This is the Daily Mail demonstrating its talent for 'churnalism' - why bother writing an original article when you can just steal someone elses idea.

Click to rate 30 1

Michael, London, United Kingdom, 1 year ago

Speechless!

Click to rate 27 4

Danny 84, Valletta, Malta, 1 year ago

Chucky

Click to rate 17 7

Snake Plissken, escaping from new york city, United Kingdom, 1 year ago

Nobody's perfect!

Click to rate 32 55

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We are no longer accepting comments on this article.

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Battle of the booties! Beyonce, Kim Kardashian and Nicki Minaj put their dramatic curves on show as they dominate the MTV VMAs red carpet

Beyonce led the way looking simply sensational in a pastel beaded gown with feathered wings as she glided down the red carpet alongside her...

615 comments **5** videos



Carlos Danger is caught out AGAIN! Disgraced ex-congressman Anthony Weiner 'sexted a brunette while his son, five, was in bed with him'

New images the shamed politician sent to the mystery women while his wife Huma Abdein toured the country for Hillary Clinton's campaign have...

comments **1** video



'So rude!': 911 dispatcher is placed on administrative leave for snapping and yelling at delivery man who was beaten and who watched his...

Emergency dispatcher Nicole Scarino has been placed on administrative leave because of the way

Sunday



Dwyane Wade's pastor mother honors her niece's memory as families hold emotional vigil for mother-of-four shot and killed on the streets of Chicago



'Justin Timberlake is very good!' Britney Spears reveals she wants to duet with former sweetheart
Fans of the pair will be thrilled with the news



Pretty in pink! Eva Longoria sizzles in a sundress as she hits supermarket with husband José Baston
Shopping for essentials in Malibu



His dream girl! Kanye West admits he tried to impress Kim Kardashian with his 'cool outfits' in hopes she'd go out with him
Well, it worked



'We are so happy for you two!' Lauren Conrad celebrates the wedding of former Laguna Beach co-star Dieter Schmitz and his bride Isabell Hiebl



Colin Kaepernick stays defiant and insists he doesn't care losing sponsors or getting cut after he refused to stand up during the national anthem



Chris Hemsworth stays in character as Thor for spoof video and talks about sabbatical in Australia after being overlooked by Captain America



Kate Moss is drinking again after 'two months sober' as she enjoys wine with friends on Greek holiday
Spotted drinking wine and cocktails on holiday



Bikini-clad Emily Ratajkowski showcases her flawless physique as she hits the beach in Santorini
She may be allergic to wearing clothes



Alicia Silverstone and son Bear Blu laugh together as they shop for veggies at farmer's market
He seemed happy helping his mum



How a polite African schoolboy became pop's most outrageous frontman: Unseen pictures show a young Freddie Mercury - teeth and all



This is why she works out! Jennifer Garner indulges as she treats daughter Violet to doughnuts
Spotted carrying a box of the delicious sweets

she spoke during a 911 call made by Chinese...

comments **1** video



Family drags body of missing teacher, 23, from lake just three days before he was meant to start his first job in the classroom

Krishawn Noble, 23, vanished in Kernersville, North Carolina, last week after his empty boat washed ashore on the edge of a lake. Friends...

comments



Girl, 17, who went missing from Myrtle Beach in 2009 'was gang-raped, shot, and fed to alligators' says FBI agent

Missing teen Brittanee Drexel, who vanished from Myrtle Beach in 2009, may have been raped, shot and fed to alligators by Timothy Da'Shaun...

comments **1** video



Ithaca College student, 19, from Brooklyn dies after he and another man were stabbed at Cornell University

Ithaca College sophomore Anthony Nazaire died from stab woulds he sustained during a fight on the Cornell University campus early Sunday...

5 comments



Is it because everyone already knows how it ends? Obama movie recounting Barack and Michelle's first date is off to a slow start after...

Southside With You, which came out on Friday, grossed $3 million during its first weekend and ended Sunday in 13th position at the box...

comments **1** video



'I will continue to sit': Colin Kaepernick stays defiant and insists he doesn't care about losing sponsors or getting cut after he refused...

The San Francisco 49ers quarterback said he will not stand to honor The Star Spangled Banner, unless he feels the flag 'represents what it's...

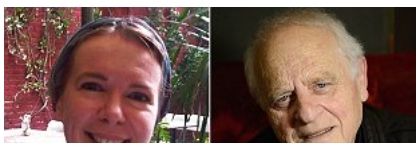
comments **2** videos



Iran 'detains Iranian-Canadian member of its nuclear negotiation team on infiltrator charges'

Iran has detained one of its nuclear negotiators on suspicion of 'infiltration,' state news agency IRNA reported. Abdolrasoul Dorri Esfahani...

24 comments **1** video



Holocaust survivor and famous theatre director, 86, announces engagement to his 39-year-old



The perfect accessory! Chrissy Teigen and John Legend show off baby Luna to Sports Illustrated pals at fan event
Four-month-old daughter



Mariah Carey's dying, HIV-positive sister arrested for prostitution 'after using her sister's lyrics to promise a 'sweet, sweet fantasy' to cops in vice sting



Legendary Mexican singer Juan Gabriel dies of 'heart attack' aged 66 two days after performing in Los Angeles
He was a superstar



That's an eyeful! Victoria Silvstedt, 41, flashes the flesh in plunging button-down swimsuit and sheer skirt
In St Tropez



Seven-time world champion triathlete, 63, killed while cycling after she is hit by a car
USA Triathlon Hall of Fame member Karen McKeachie



Trailblazer! Willow Smith shows off fierce face tattoos and nose ring in photoshoot for CR Fashion Book
Shot by photographer Bruce Weber



Hands off MY balloon dad! Little Mia Tindall gets into the festival fun with Mike and Zara
Mia wasn't going to let anybody come between her and her balloon



'Saying goodbye to big bro!': Kelly Ripa shares sweet snap of her three children as eldest son Michael heads to college
A big milestone for the family



Her biggest fan! Rihanna wears sweater with her face on it as she heads to Madison Square Garden ahead of MTV VMAs
All press is good press



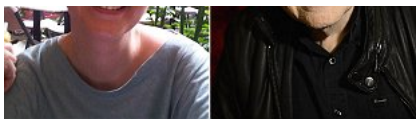
Hair revivers, perfect foundation and Victoria Beckham's super serum: Elsa McAlonan's beauty upgrades revealed
Beauty tips



We definitely ARE amused! How the 'grumpy' Queen Victoria laughed like a drain and was unfairly judged as having no sense of humor



WWE Hall of Famer Mr Fuji passes away at age 82
The five-time WWE Tag Team champion Harry Fujiwara passed away on Sunday



Russian girlfriend after meeting at actors party...

Jack Garfein (pictured), an 86-year-old Holocaust survivor and iconic figure in American theatre and acting, has gotten engaged to his...

8 comments



Soft landing! Khloe Kardashian's ex French Montana rests his head on Iggy Azalea's bountiful behind as they fly to Cabo on a private jet



Winging it! Kanye West skips MTV VMAs dress rehearsal and leaves MTV VMAs guessing over how he'll fill his four minutes on stage
Typical Kanye



Family matters! Reese Witherspoon stuns in bright, patterned dress while heading to church with husband Jim Toth and her two sons
Toned figure



Leggy model and actress Nicola Peltz flaunts her svelte figure in black crop top and skintight jeans after dinner with friends
Glamorous display



Taking a leap! Olympic gold medalist Laurie Hernandez joins Dancing With the Stars
This announcement follows a series of victories



Horror film Don't Breathe tops box office with $26 million as it topples Suicide Squad from No.1 spot
Audiences turned out in droves



From Beckham to Pec-ham: Brooklyn goes shirtless in the gym as he shows off his bulging biceps doing push-ups
Who knew Brooklyn was this ripped!



I told you I'd get a medal, kids! Mo Farah and two of his children proudly display the golds he said he would win for them at Rio
British Olympian



Hitting the road! Lady Gaga takes her father Joe Germanotta for a drive in her classic Ford Bronco in Malibu
Gaga's daddy-daughter road trip



Holocaust survivor and famous theater director, 86, announces engagement to his 39-year-old Russian girlfriend after meeting at actors party



PICTURED: Jean-Claude Van Damme happily posing with the brother of a convicted terrorist... who paid $5,000 for his seat at charity dinner



'Simon didn't have me back!' Reinstated judge Nicole Scherzinger lashes out at Cowell for her dismissal from X Factor panel two years ago

Kendall Jenner flashes her endless legs in tiny shorts as she heads to dinner with male companion following Kanye West's art exhibition



Mariah Carey puts on a very leggy display in a scarlet sequin gown with extreme thigh-split as she seduces the crowd at Vegas gig
Titillating display



'Played hooky today': Shailene Woodley uses lunch break to protest the Dakota Access Pipeline at Hollywood rally
'Enough Is Enough' rally



Usain Bolt got party girls to flash their breasts at him and then made them stand on a 'podium' while he awarded them medals
Isn't he tired yet?



Finding Prince Charming contestant reveals his HIV positive status to 'Gay Bachelor' Robert Sepulveda Jr on emotional episode
Big revelation



Guardians Of The Galaxy director James Gunn reveals Chris Pratt picked Kurt Russell to play Star-Lord's dad in Vol.2
Long awaited film



What more do you need? Fans claim this selfie 'proves' rapper Tupac Shakur is alive and well almost 20 years after he was gunned down



CBS host Charles Osgood bids farewell to loyal viewers after 22 years anchoring 'Sunday Morning'
He will be missed by millions



Leonardo DiCaprio goes for a low-key look in a beret and blue jeans... just a week after crashing his car in the Hamptons
Just running errands



Swimsuit model Hailey Clauson flaunts her endless legs in denim hot pants as she enjoys day out with hunky beau Julian Herrera
Sports Illustrated star



Family funday! Sarah Michelle Gellar and Freddie Prinze Jr treat their children to a day of shopping and fro-yo
With their kids Charlotte and Rocky



Cara Delevingne looks like she's stepped straight out of bed in kimono cape and sweatpants as she returns to LA following family holiday in Capri



'I poured myself into my relationship!' Mandy Moore says her divorce had to happen but her stalled acting career has been 'soul-crushing'
Speaking candidly



At least he didn't miss his flight this time! Jean-Claude Van Damme takes a PRIVATE JET to Melbourne... after his delayed arrival in Sydney



Leggy Kylie Jenner wears nothing but a Snoop Dogg sweater as she throws her arms around Tyga on trip to magic show in Vegas with his son King Cairo



EXCLUSIVE PICTURES: Justin Bieber and Sofia Richie can't keep their hands off each other as they put on a VERY steamy display in Mexico



Hot mama! Chrissy Teigen puts on a VERY busty display as she leaves New York with husband John Legend and baby daughter Luna
Still got it!



Stephen Bear's ranting father is ejected from the Celebrity Big Brother studios following his son's win
He won the reality TV show in the UK



Newly single Jennifer Lopez flashes plenty of leg and cleavage in extremely low-cut mini dress at ex-husband Marc Anthony's concert
They split in 2011



They're inseparable! Ariana Grande leaves VMA rehearsals with new boyfriend Mac Miller as she mirrors his style in funky bomber and baggy jeans



Tennis ace Maria Sharapova wears striped T-shirt to shop in Beverly Hills as she moves on from disappointment at missing Rio Olympics



'I'm coming if you'll let me in': Barbra Streisand claims she will relocate to AUSTRALIA if Donald Trump beats Hillary Clinton in US election
She's had enough



Nicole Kidman and Kate Winslet join a host of stars to star in stunning behind-the-scenes images for iconic 2017 Pirelli Calendar



Just you and me kid! Justin Timberlake enjoys a nature walk with son Silas after hosting star-studded fundraiser for Hillary Clinton



She's red hot! Bella Thorne models sultry dress and goes TOPLESS to model jacket during racy photo shoot
Provocative shoot



'I started eating more clean and walking': Pregnant Blac Chyna turns the scale as she announces she's LOST 7 lbs. with weeks to go before birth



Pout and about: Milla Jovovich looks a little bleary-eyed in lip-print shirt as she leaves Hollywood nightclub
The mother-of-two still enjoys a party!



Charlie Sheen 'slashes his child supports payments' to ex-wives Brooke Mueller and Denise Richards due to 'financial trouble'
Halfing the payments



Family reunion! Christie Brinkley and all three of her children gather round for night out in East Hampton
She was practically bursting with pride



Couple's dressing! Jaden Smith and girlfriend Sarah Snyder wear almost identical looks as they rock their way through Soho
Stroll around New York



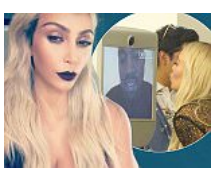
Pregnant Behati Prinsloo shows off her baby bump in a comfy ensemble as she joins Adam Levine for monster-themed Maroon 5 video shoot



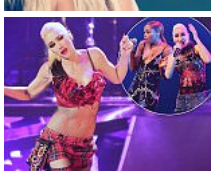
She's got that wow factor! Jewel flaunts her figure in cut-out LBD as she joins variety of stars at Comedy Central's Roast of Rob Lowe
Let him have it



Back to blonde! Kim Kardashian shows off lighter locks and bold lips as she blows kisses to Kanye over FaceTime at his Famous art exhibition



Let Us Blow Your Mind: Gwen Stefani showcases her incredible figure and toned tummy as she takes to the stage with Eve at gig in Canada



Yummy mummy! Chrissy Teigen flashes bare midriff in clingy crop top during night out with John Legend
Date night in New York city



Natalie Appleton enjoys a low key day with husband Liam Howlett and their pet Chihuahua... as she prepares for All Saints comeback tour

Sheer madness! Kris Jenner dares to bare in a peek-a-boo dress as she has date night with Corey Gamble
Taking style inspiration from her daughters



Idina Menzel shows off flawless figure in cherry-print swimsuit as she splashes in the ocean on set of Beaches
Splashing about in the ocean



Earning her stripes! Lupita Nyong'o flaunts her svelte frame in strapless blue and white mini-dress at John Legend concert
Stunning stripes



Nothing to roast here! Rob Lowe looks hunky with his gorgeous wife Sheryl Berkoff and their two sons at Comedy Central event
Still a heart-throb



'How about this for a workout?' Proud papa Alec Baldwin breaks a sweat weight lifting son Rafael into the air
Playing with kids is an effective form of exercise



His favorite role! Chris Pratt heads to the movies with his son Jack as wife Anna Faris runs errands
Low-key day at the movies



Bromancing the stone! Former costars Michael Douglas and Danny DeVito catch-up over lunch in Beverly Hills
They've collaborated on several films



She did it again! Britney Spears rocks dual buns and tiny pink shorts for day out in NYC following 'awkward' Carpool Karaoke appearance
She's moved on



Ariana Grande flaunts her toned limbs in shirt dress while out and about with incognito boyfriend Mac Miller
Yet to confirm they're officially an item



Christina Aguilera spends quality time with fiance Matthew Rutler and their daughter as they attend Broadway musical in NYC
Family outing



Lupita Nyong'o shows her flair for fashion in geometric dress as she attends pre-VMA event in NYC
The actress impressed with her sartorial choice



Mick Jagger promises a five-figure sum every month to the ballerina carrying his eighth child
He's agreed a financial deal with the mother of his eighth child



Oh mama! Chrissy Teigen nearly spills out of tiny lace bralet as new mom wears midriff-baring ensemble in NYC
Out with her husband in New York



Hairs to you Dan! Downton Abbey's Stevens shows off luxurious new mane for role as the Prince in Disney's live action Beauty And The Beast



No better team! Adam Levine dresses like a Pokémon as he joins his Maroon 5 bandmates to shoot new music video
Filming a music video in Los Angeles



Inside Kanye's top secret art exhibit: Kim stands over naked figure of HERSELF at rapper's mysterious showcase
They're Famous



They're inseparable! Kristen Stewart and girlfriend Alicia Cargile run errands together in LA before grabbing dinner
Out with their dog



My kind of Greek life!' Bethenny Frankel shares bikini snap and gets a massage while topless during island getaway
Flawless figure



She felt the burn! Drew Barrymore shares a make-up free and very sweaty selfie after a hot yoga session
She is focusing on her well-being



Hope Solo takes indefinite leave of absence from Seattle Reign after being suspended for six months by the US women's team



Mommy's little helper! Alessandra Ambrosio and son Noah gets some family time in as they do a spot of shopping
Quality one-on-one time with her four-year-old



Kourtney Kardashian and ex Scott Disick enjoy co-parenting as they take son Mason to dinner
Putting on a united front with former partner



Definitely back on! Diddy and Cassie look loved up as rapper throws his on-again girlfriend a birthday party after THAT 'massive row'



Putting her best foot forward! Hailee Steinfeld works her magic in thigh high boots and khaki green playsuit
The actress/singer is currently on tour

Thor blimey! Shirtless actor Chris Hemsworth shows off ripped torso as he plunges into pool during getaway
Wasn't afraid to show off his ripped physique



Golden girl Simone Biles loses all her photos from the Olympics... but Twitter users come to the rescue by sending her their favorite snaps



New selfie 'proves' iconic rapper Tupac Shakur is alive and well almost 20 years after he was gunned down
Fans claim to have discovered a 2015 selfie



Ariel Winter flashes her stems as she steps out in only a cheeky tee and thigh high boots in West Hollywood
Spotted stepping out in West Hollywood



Live It Up! Jennifer Lopez consoles herself with a shopping spree in NYC after sharing cryptic post-breakup Instagram post
Retail therapy



Work, work, work, work! Rihanna gets some practice in ahead of her MTV VMAs performance... but billboard-buying Drake is nowhere to be seen



Jessica Gomes shows off her pert derrière and hint of cleavage as she strikes a sultry pose on the beach wearing a VERY high-cut swimsuit
Behind-the-scenes snap



Hats off to her! Reese Witherspoon dons summery fedora for lunch outing with husband Jim Toth and their son Tennessee
Family outing



Crown Princess Mary stuns in a summery white lace number as she meets with children and presents a speech at a music festival
Australian-born Princess



'I don't believe in telling him how to raise his kids': Model Elle Macpherson reveals she and husband Jeffrey Soffer have different parenting styles



Sister act! Charlotte McKinney flaunts her curves in teeny bikini during beach day with older sibling Garland
The model and actress sported a tiny bikini



The 15th century castle where Game of Thrones star Rose Leslie grew up is up for rent on Airbnb... and look out for the bullet holes in the medieval tower

'It's an entire continent with a drinking problem': Shameless star William H. Macy says Australia is a nation of alcoholics
Taking a swipe



Catherine Zeta-Jones knocks £7million off her Majorca mansion where Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson have partied... but it'll still set you back a whopping £34million



Happy to be home! Natalie Portman flashes a smile in LA... after admitting she's relieved to be back in US following time among the 'cool' Parisians



Just run with it! Pregnant Katherine Heigl covers up her growing bump to film action scenes for new show Doubt
Expectant mom



Back to reality! Gisele Bundchen cuts a low-key figure as she prepares to fly home after appearing at the Olympics
She kept casual



Red alert! Christina Aguilera matches her hair to her shoes as she steps out in form-fitting jumpsuit
Songstress showed off her fiery hair



'She's not banned': Uber does damage control after Kim Kardashian tweeted company wouldn't drive Kendall Jenner
'Minor account issue'



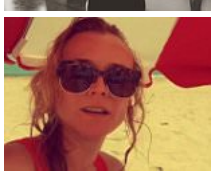
Sister act! Cara Delevingne and sibling Poppy cut casual figures as they touch-down in LA after family holiday
Cara opted for a casual grunge look



'Saturdaze!' Jessica Simpson flaunts her fit figure in plunging bodycon dress as she poses for Instagram snap
Fitness kick



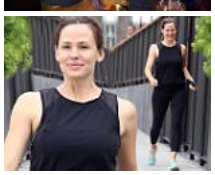
Enjoying the single life! Diane Kruger goes make-up free as she spends a day at the beach
Enjoying the Hamptons Saturday afternoon



Man shot dead at nightclub throwing party hosted by Young Jeezy in Virginia Beach
A man has died after being shot at Club Embassy in Virginia



Make-up free Jennifer Garner looks happy and relaxed as she starts the day with a workout
She wore a black racerback top and cropped leggings



Spice Up Your Life? Geri Horner, Emma Bunton and Mel B prove wild girls' nights aren't what they used to be as newly-reformed 'GEM' scoff cake and sip tea



'I get annoyed when people think I'm a polite Englishman. I'm a nasty piece of work': Hugh Grant admits he's nothing like his on-screen roles



Hold on tightly, Ms Knightley! Proud mum Keira and husband James take baby daughter Edie for a stroll in France
Family holiday



'We're the ones nobody remembers?': Nicole Scherzinger turns a blind eye as Simon Cowell throws shade at The Pussycat Dolls during the UK X Factor



'I'm not going to sit there and count': Amber Rose reveals she has lost track of how many people she's slept with
'I've been around the block a few times'



George Clooney's ex Elisabetta Canalis shows off her amazing figure in denim shorts as she enjoys day out with daughter Skyler in LA



GIRL ABOUT TOWN: Queen gives austerity some stick
Of all the crises the Queen has faced, a battle over sticks must be the most bizarre



GIRL ABOUT TOWN: No wonder Arthur's got an army of female fans...
Arthur Chatto, 17, is the youngest son of the Queen's niece Lady Sarah Chatto



GIRL ABOUT TOWN: Is it really brie you're looking for?
Was Lionel Richie's hit song Hello really a homage to tea and cheese?



Newly-blonde Kim Kardashian flaunts her impressive weight loss in skin-tight mesh jumpsuit as she joins leggy Kendall ahead of Kanye's art exhibition



Kylie Jenner packs on the PDA with beau Tyga in steamy Instagram snap as she continues to brush off engagement rumours
Definitely back together



She's got cattitude! Miley Cyrus wears paw print jacket while out for dinner with Liam Hemsworth as wedding rumours persist
Picture purrfect couple

EXCLUSIVE: 'She seems to be very happy right now': CBB star Frankie Grande confirms sister Ariana is smitten with beau Mac Miller
Star couple



Downcast Larry King steps out alone after dismissing reports of wife Shawn King's 'affair'
He was blindsided by the allegation



San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick refuses to stand for national anthem 'to protest the oppression of black people'



Petra Nemcova sizzles as she goes braless in scarlet suit to attend star-studded Equal Means Equal screening in LA
Lady in red



'God protects me': Reggaeton star J Balvin escapes uninjured after small plane crash in The Bahamas
The Colombian artist thanked God for survival



That's one way to get noticed! Actor Thomas Jane goes BAREFOOT on the red carpet
He may not be very well known but all eyes were on him



Courteney Cox cuts a casual figure as she leaves London with fiancé Johnny McDaid and her daughter after confessing she regrets cosmetic procedures



Country singer Jana Kramer thanks fans for support during 'an extremely hard time'... after separating from husband Mike Caussin
They've got her back



Jennie Garth flashes her legs in jersey mini dress as she steps out for a day of shopping with husband Dave Abrams
Former teen star



Nicole Scherzinger puts on a leggy display in leather dress on the new series of UK X Factor... after claiming she's the s most glamorous judge ever



PICTURE EXCLUSIVE: Jude Law, 43, looks smitten as he steps out with stunning girlfriend Phillipa Coan, 30, for leisurely London stroll



All at sea! David Furnish joins Neil Patrick Harris and his family for a fun-filled boat trip on idyllic Portofino break
Took his kids for a stroll and dinner



A family affair! Gordon Ramsay looks the picture of happiness as he enjoys day out with his three daughters and wife Tana... two months after tragic miscarriage



Amy Adams stuns in a boho chic floral frock as she goes make-up free for low-key shopping trip in LA
Looked fabulous on a low-key day out in LA



No holding back! Bisexual Bella Thorne celebrates being single by eating donuts in Gucci, dropping the F bomb and jumping around in a skimpy top



Justin Bieber's rumoured fling Sahara Ray shares yet another TOPLESS Instagram photo as she flaunts her shapely derrière in tight jeans



Life in the fast lane: Usain Bolt is out AGAIN at TWO clubs before inviting at least SIX women back to his London hotel room at 5am



Reunited at last! Aubrey O'Day flaunts her hourglass figure in hip-hugging white lace dress as she locks lips with boyfriend Pauly D after leaving CBB house



Frances Bean Cobain's estranged husband 'hires Courtney Love's former PI to protect his ex from Sam Lufti after threatening messages'
Desperate measures



Whitney Port shows off her taut tummy in a crochet crop top and ripped jeans as she prepares for holiday with friends
The Hills star



She's wearing a ring! Miley Cyrus sports diamond encrusted gold band on left hand finger as she holds hands with Liam Hemsworth in LA
Symbol of their love



Is this Lupita Nyong'o's new man? Oscar-winning actress 'has been dating GQ Style's Fashion Editor for six months'
Beautiful couple



'Need Money For Birkin': Kris Jenner gushes over new hot pink neon sign in her custom pricey Hermès bag closet
Remodeled purse closet



Justin Bieber treats girlfriend Sofia Richie to a day of pampering before whisking her away on a romantic getaway
A very romantic gesture



Hugh Hefner would approve! Victoria's Secret model Kelly Gale flaunts her busty bikini body on Instagram... after THAT racy Playboy cover



Aly Raisman's bling is too much for Big Papi! Olympic gymnast piles her medals onto David Ortiz before throwing ceremonial first pitch
Golden girl



Princess Diana is named the biggest style inspiration of all time - beating out everyone from Coco Chanel to Jackie Kennedy Onassis



Nicole Scherzinger puts on leggy display in leather dress as she celebrates new X Factor series after claiming she is show's most glamorous judge ever



Shining star! Makeup-free Heidi Klum wears sunglasses at night as she treats her children to a fancy Chinese dinner
Bite to eat in Beverly Hills



'It's been that way for centuries': Renee Zellweger slams society's perception of beauty amid plastic surgery rumors
Poignant message



Penny Lancaster shows off her model frame in daringly low-cut jumpsuit as she joins husband Rod Stewart for family day out
She radiated beauty



'Afternoon tea with my wife': Joe Manganiello and Sofia Vergara share cute snaps during romantic date
Their first anniversary is in November



Something special for the wife? James Corden browses designer purses in Beverly Hills ahead of his four-year wedding anniversary
They married in 2012



'It hit a sensual nerve!' Oprah Winfrey reveals she got inspired by her own show to try out some new sex moves
Queen Sugar got her a little hot and bothered



Hello petal! Miranda Kerr flashes her toned tummy in a black crop top while picking up a bouquet of flowers
Spotted shopping at Whole Foods



Beauty in black! Irina Shayk covers up her model physique in casual overalls as she takes a stroll in NYC
Spotted sporting a large pair of sunglasses



He's the king of self-promotion! Kanye West steps out in NYC clad in his Yeezy apparel... as he prepares to perform at MTV VMAs



Gisele Bundchen poses in clingy crop-top on Rio rooftop... as Tom Brady plays first NFL game since injury
The model rocked a Vogue photoshoot



Standout style! Paris Hilton flashes her slim gams in retina-roasting neon yellow dress at LAX
She turned heads in an extremely bright dress



Barefoot Lady Gaga goes ringless (and trouserless) for a beach day in Malibu
She was joined by a handsome mystery man and a brunette gal pal



What's cooking good looking? Reese Witherspoon has food on her mind as she stylishly struts along with some cookbooks under her arm



Time to Shake It Off! Taylor Swift heads to dance class in racy cut-out leggings after boob job rumours and claims of row with Tom Hiddleston



Fancy traveler! Iggy Azalea flashes toned midriff and ample assets in black crop top at LAX airport
Always happy to flaunt her assets



Off to see dad? Jenna Dewan looks stylish while carrying daughter Everly through LAX... as Channing Tatum films new comedy in Atlanta
Dressed down



'He loves me so much!' Kim Zolciak-Biermann gushes over stunning diamond ring that's early anniversary gift from hubby Kroy
Very expensive present



Now that's not true! Busty Christina Milian uses fashion to declare she 'has no t*ts'
She was carrying a handbag that read: 'I have no t*ts'



Mel Gibson puts lavish house on the market for $2.6million after ex Oksana Grigorieva moves out as part of new child support agreement



Dwyane Wade's cousin shot dead in crossfire in Chicago while pushing her child in a stroller 24 hours after the NBA star condemned the violence plaguing the city



Sibling style swap! Kylie Jenner steals sister Kendall's new bra-flashing look... just a day after she was accused of having a secret boob job



It's back! Blair Witch sequel's claustrophobia-inducing trailer shows camping trip gone terrifyingly wrong
Directed by Adam Wingard



Crazy ink love: Ariana Grande leaves tattoo parlor with new boyfriend Mac Miller after getting two new pieces of body art
Lasting love?



Gwyneth Paltrow reveals 12-year-old daughter Apple helps her stay on top of the latest make-up trends
Make-up savvy tween daughter



'Hello little friend!' Alessandra Ambrosio introduces her family's new hamster in Snapchat video... as son Noah, four, helps out in the kitchen



DON'T MISS

'Reminders of a bad period in my life': Brynne Edelsten sells skimpy dresses and G-strings bought by 'obsessive' ex Geoffrey after filing bankruptcy



'4 sets!' Pregnant Hilaria Baldwin lifts weights while wearing a frock and high heels as she exercises her arms before night out
Yoga instructor



Teen Mom 2's Jenelle Evans reveals she had a miscarriage just a month before latest pregnancy with third child
Heartbreaking



Jennifer Garner flashes her legs in denim shorts as she heads to dinner with daughter Violet and a male friend
Knockout legs



Are you sure you're just friends? Rihanna can't contain her delight as she steps out after Drake surprises her with a billboard
Very romantic gesture



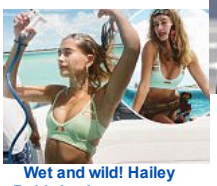
Berry nice! Halle keeps it simple in thigh-skimming LBD as she picks up some healthy food to go
Shopping in Los Angeles



Rachel Weisz epitomizes the New York working mom as she hails a cab in pretty frock and plimsolls



Just another New Yorker in search of a yellow cab



Wet and wild! Hailey Baldwin shares throwback snap of herself rinsing off in bikini during Kylie Jenner's birthday trip to Turks and Caicos



A classic choice! Farrah Abraham flashes toned legs in effortlessly chic LBD at gifting lounge
Posed up a storm with a pair of sunglasses



EXCLUSIVE: Tom Cruise's Scientologist son Connor is living the high life with a $500,000 fishing boat, Mustang GT and women fawning all over him when he DJs



Pregnant Blac Chyna runs errands with son King Cairo after fiancé Rob blasts family for not accepting his baby mama in KUWTK teaser
Back to basics



Rita PHW-Ora! Chart-topper turns heads with plunging black dress as she steps out in NYC
She is more than capable of amping-up the wow-factor



'I'm sure it'll be amazing': Narcos star Stephanie Sigman vents frustration at not being invited to show's season 2 premiere
Held in Hollywood



PICTURE EXCLUSIVE: Tom Hardy 'flies' replica British spitfire on set of Dunkirk as remarkable pictures give a glimpse into how action epic is being filmed



Elton John and husband David Furnish wear matching white trousers as they join friends for dinner in Portofino
Dining out



Vroom vroom! Ryan Reynolds rides around town on a motorbike in matching leather jacket and helmet
Running his errands on his sleek machine



SEBASTIAN SHAKESPEARE: Britain's hottest royal celebrates her 21st in style before she embarks on career in fashion
Lady Amelia Windsor

More than half of Britons want WILLIAM to be the next king - with just one in four saying it should be Charles
Charles will take the throne





'Do Good Soul Searcher': Reese Witherspoon is ready to work it as she trades one inspiring top for another during daily exercise session



SEBASTIAN SHAKESPEARE: Zara Phillips quits high-tech firm after a Chinese takeover
The Queen's granddaughter



Back to the ballroom! Julianne Hough and brother Derek are both set to return for the new season of Dancing With The Stars
Judge and a pro



Leggy Hailey Baldwin stops traffic in slinky white number as birthday celebrations for her friend Justine Skye continue
Glowing in white



Tulisa exposes her taut middle as she teases new music with an energetic performance at Manchester Pride in the UK
Surprised the audience



Nicki Minaj's brother given time to consider plea bargain over child sex abuse charges
He has been charged with raping a 12-year-old girl multiple times



Bathing beauty! Demi Lovato shows off sculpted figure in colourful bikini as she enjoys a break from tour amid new romance rumours



Cara Delevingne goes bottomless in the name of charity as she protects her modesty with just a SUNFLOWER for daring new magazine cover



REVEALED: Roger Ailes kept two HANDGUNS hidden in the door of his Fox News office for 'personal protection'
He had a Glock and a Smith & Wesson



Nicole Scherzinger is 'getting her game on' in the gym ahead of X Factor live shows... after lazing around all summer
Getting ready for war



The sad downfall of Bam Margera: Shocking pictures show Jackass star urinating in the street and getting carted off by the police during holiday with his wife

Pixie Lott nails day-to-night style as she flashes her legs in a plunging black gown after beating the heat in shorts
Two flawless ensembles



Abs-olutely stunning! Vanessa Hudgens flashes her taut stomach while heading to Pilates class
And she's off for another workout



'I would obviously love to dress Hillary': Marchesa designer Georgina Chapman talks about designing the candidate's inaugural ball outfit



Style Swoon: From Beyoncé's new line of Lemonade-inspired merch to Jenna Dewan-Tatum's killer outfit, FEMAIL reveals the fashions we are loving



Steven Avery's attorney wants to use new DNA test that could PROVE cops planted evidence that convicted the 'Making a Murderer' inmate



Can YOU spot Anna Kournikova? Tennis ace challenges her fans to work out which little girl in a primary school photo is her
Spot the star!



Aubrey O'Day finishes fifth as she follows Frankie Grande out of Celebrity Big Brother final in the UK
Renee Graziano is the only American left



Not your average cop! Jennifer Lopez is an arresting sight as she puts on busty display in sheer top on set of Shades of Blue
All eyes were on her



Hulk Hogan continues his assault on Nick Denton as Gawker founder agrees to sell NYC condo after judge to denies request to rent property



Emily Ratajkowski flashes her toned abs in a crop top as she soaks up the sun in Santorini after posting NAKED hot tub snap
Flawless figure



The mane attraction! Melissa McCarthy shows off curly hair as she gets to work on new movie Life Of The Party with husband Ben Falcone



She's nailed it! Nicole Scherzinger wears bizarre DIY-inspired earring as she steps out in London
She's never shy when it comes to fashion

'Wake up. Kick A. Repeat': Jessica Alba makes bold statement on her T-shirt after defending The Honest Company amid lawsuits**
Fierce lady



Making duets 'great again!' Clinton supporter Barbra Streisand sings Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better with Jimmy Fallon's Trump
She's got the best words



Attack of the tan lines! Sun-loving Khloe Kardashian and Rafael Nadal prove that even celebrities can't escape those awkward marks
They're human too



Basking in Glory! Britney Spears promotes new album in NYC after fans praise her 'amazing' Carpool Karaoke
She's a hit... Again



Beauty class is in session! You'll ace make-up 101 and advanced skincare when you stock up on fall cosmetics inspired by school supplies



Paris Jackson reveals ankle tattoo of boyfriend Michael Snoddy's surname as they cuddle at Disneyland
Let's hope they stay together



'Everything is going to be okay': Kim and Kourtney Kardashian rally around Khloe after she files for divorce from Lamar Odom for second time



'Well, why can't a woman be paid like us?' Scandal star Jeff Perry takes on the wage gap in the comical musical parody 'My Unfairly Paid Lady'



EXCLUSIVE: Larry King's friends reveal his appearance with 'cheating' wife on Hallmark Home & Family show was a 'sham'



Do not mention the falling-out! John Cleese is in talks to return to the BBC after he was offered starring role in a new sitcom written just for him



Busty Taylor Swift flaunts noticeably fuller chest in clingy red crop top after boob job rumors
Seen looking rather busty while out in NYC



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His fans were baffled



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What's The Real Deal About The Atacama 'Alien'?

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What's The Real Deal About The Atacama "Alien"?

Researchers made a mysterious discovery in Chile's Atacama Desert in 2003. This tiny skeleton looked human, but had many features that left scientists scratching their heads. When the images hit the internet, many people assumed the only explanation could be aliens. Thankfully, more reasonable heads prevailed and the remains were subjected to a battery of forensic testing in order to identify how this anomalous skeleton, nicknamed Ata, came to be.

So what made this specimen so peculiar? For starters, the skeleton was only 15 centimeters (6 inches) long. Many initially speculated that the remains were from a premature birth or miscarried fetus, though others disregarded the whole thing as a hoax.

Ata's size isn't the only thing that perplexed researchers; a host of physical deformities did not make it entirely clear if the skeleton is human or a non-human primate. Humans have 12 ribs, but this individual only had 10. The skull indicated the organism could have had turricephaly, which gives the head a cone-shaped appearance (which really didn't help dissuade people from thinking Ata was an alien). Additional deformity of the face and jaw made the head look squished, giving it an appearance that was even further away from a typical human.

The skeleton remained in a private collection until 2009, when it had been brought to a symposium in Barcelona. In the fall of 2012, scientists were given an opportunity to study Ata via x-rays, CAT scans, and genetic sampling. Imaging showed that the chest cavity still had the remains of lungs and a heart inside. The Atacama Desert is one of the most arid regions on the planet, and would allow biological material to preserve incredibly well.

The preliminary genetic results do indicate the skeleton is definitely of human origin, but about 9% of the DNA tested did not match the human genome reference. While 9% sounds like a huge discrepancy, it just refers to the sequence portions used for reference, not the entire genome. These results are well within the expected parameters for contamination and degradation of the DNA after spending so long exposed to the elements. The preliminary results of the mitochondrial DNA were consistent with a haplotype found in Chile, meaning Ata's mother was local to the area where the remains were found.

One of the most amazing discoveries from the analysis was that Ata was not a fetus. There were mature teeth present in the mouth and the bones were well-developed, with the leg bones showing growth plates that one would expect to see in a 6-8 year old child. While the testing did provide answers, it also raised many more questions. How could a 6 year old child only be 6 inches long?

There are a few possibilities to explain this:

Dwarfism: It is possible that Ata was the afflicted with an extreme case of dwarfism, though the smallest person ever confirmed was 54.6 cm (21.5 in) tall. Also, no genetic indicators of dwarfism have been identified yet.

Progeria: Ata could be a fetus that suffered from an extreme form of progeria, which brings about symptoms of aging very early in life. However, there aren't any genetic indicators of that disease yet, either.

Mummification: It is possible that the genotype and phenotype aren't matching up because there weren't any genetic anomalies. Ata may have been stillborn or miscarried and then subjected to badly-performed desiccation or mummification, causing the bones to take on such an odd appearance. But, this explanation can't account for the two missing ribs or growth plates within the bones.

While we do know that Ata was human and most definitely *not* an extraterrestrial (no matter what the "documentary" *Sirius* has to say), that's about the extent of what can be said for sure. More thorough genetic testing is still ongoing and researchers are trying to reconcile the base pairs that did not match up with the human reference. The only information that has been released so far has been preliminary, though the researchers have pledged that further results will go through the appropriate peer-review channels and be published in an accredited scientific journal.

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Dear FIFA: There Is No Scientific Test to Prevent Age Fraud

scientificamerican.com

Soccer federation's tests to combat "age doping" and bar suspected older players from youth events should be red carded

- By Dina Fine Maron on August 11, 2016

You could be forgiven for missing that the qualifying matches for a big youth soccer event—the Africa Cup of Nations—are underway right now, what with the Olympics taking center stage all week. But then you might miss the latest "doping" scandal playing out in soccer headlines: Almost half of Nigeria's U-17 (under age 17) team has been sidelined based on lab scans.

Yet the dismissal is not over a traditional malfeasance such as performance-enhancing chemicals or hormonal supplements. It is about age fraud. Clinical testing suggested that these players were actually older than 17.

As a result, 24 young male athletes from Nigeria were deemed ineligible to participate, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) told *Scientific American*. (Originally, 26 players were excluded but two players were reinstated after appeal.) The decision to bar these Nigerian players from the tournament was based on a procedure that FIFA, soccer's international governing body, put in place in 2009. It urged youth players to submit to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans of their wrists in an attempt to determine their age eligibility. (CAF, which is under the auspices of FIFA, requires all players to submit to the scans as part of the regulations for the U-17 Africa Cup of Nations.)

Admirably, the protocol is designed to prevent older, stronger players from entering youth tournaments in settings where birth certificates or other ways of verifying age may be absent. According to FIFA, wrist MRIs and the bone growth they show can indicate if a player is older than 17. Yet a deeper dive into the study behind this decision reveals that its foundation is shaky at best.

FIFA rolled out this protocol based on a study conducted by its Medical Assessment and Research Center and published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine.* For that work, researchers performed wrist MRIs (deemed more ethical than exposing the subjects to x-ray radiation) on about 500 young men between the ages of 14 and 19. The teens all hailed from Switzerland, Malaysia, Algeria or Argentina. The researchers then categorized each participant's wrist bone development into one of six stages based on the fusion of his distal radius, a bone area near the wrist joint. Stage 6 represented complete fusion and stage 1 represented no fusion. Citing this work, FIFA says that if the MRI shows complete fusion of a player's wrist, it is 99 percent certain that the player is over 17 (spoiler alert: that's not really true).

Wrist bone development certainly does change during adolescence. Before puberty the human body cranks out cells that help produce new cartilage along the ends of bones. These areas of the bone, known as growth plates, are eventually converted into bone material, which helps the bones lengthen. Yet as teenagers, both males and females start producing more estrogen, which slows that cellular production process—and their growth plate cartilage subsequently gets thinner and thinner until some of the bones in that area fuse together, and the growth plates close and are replaced by solid bone. (That's why wrist scans are sometimes used alongside those of the fingers, in tandem with other biological information, to estimate a growing child's eventual height.) The exact timing of this fusion, however, varies a lot between individuals. For example, FIFA's own

researchers said in an analysis published earlier this year that using this same age cutoff for female athletes is extremely problematic because many girls already had complete fusion before age 17.

In FIFA's citing of the foundational MRI study for boys, however, its major mistake lies in applying these population-level statistics to individual athletes. A closer examination of the full data shows that the actual wrist bone growth stages can occur at a wide range of ages. Among 16-year-olds, for example, roughly the same number of kids were at stages 1, 3, 4 and 5, representing a spectrum of growth at that age. "There is so much overlap that you may have a person who is 18 who could have only minimal fusion to complete fusion, and there are people who are already fused going from ages 20 to 16," says Vicente Gilsanz, a professor of radiology and pediatrics at the University of Southern California. Although only one player in the 16-year age group was graded as completely fused (stage 6), the standard deviation in that grouping is also pretty telling.

The reason standard deviation is so illuminating comes down to basic statistics. The average age for complete fusion, according to the analysis, is 18.3 years. Yet there might be some variation in that fusion timing, and that possibility is represented by standard deviation calculated in the analysis —0.9 years. Anyone setting such important guidelines should typically include two standard deviations in either direction from the average age to capture most of that variation, says Frank Rauch, a professor of pediatrics who specializes in bone health at McGill University. (In a perfect bell curve one standard deviation will only capture about 68 percent of the values whereas two will include about 95 percent, and so on.) Here, two standard deviations from that average age of complete fusion would include ages 16 to 20. "Maybe people are not concerned about unfairly excluding kids from competition," Rauch says, "but that's the inevitable problem." FIFA had not responded to a request for comment by publication time.

Meanwhile, subsequent work also throws more cold water on the science of these wrist scans: One study on 86 young male Ghanaian players concluded, "There was no significant correlation between the chronological age and the degree of fusion." Another analysis that similarly employed wrist scans among young players found that three supposed 14-year-old male soccer players had stage 5 or stage 6 fusion. In that analysis, too, the authors similarly noted, "no correlation was observed between age category and grade of fusion." But in both studies the authors dismissed the results—suggesting perhaps players were simply not aware of their real ages.

There are also genetic and environmental factors to consider before applying this study's findings to the real world. The analysis underpinning FIFA's age regulation does include some individuals from Algeria(which is in north Africa), yet it does not include anyone from sub-Saharan Africa, where this ruling has been applied before—and is again now. Very little puberty research is focused on the sub-Saharan region, so it is difficult to pinpoint information about the onset and tempo of puberty in Nigeria. But scientists have uncovered variation elsewhere. Multiple studies have shown that kids embark on puberty at different times based on factors including nutrition, environment and ethnic background. Puberty in African-American girls who grow up in the U.S. begins roughly a year earlier, on average, than among white girls, for example.

Ultimately, there is no known foolproof, scientific test that will allow doctors—or sports regulators—to determine an individual's age. The science suggests that applying a lone wrist MRI test to make such determinations is inappropriate at best and potentially harmful at worst. Political leaders and regulators searching for age tests in other settings—such as classifying immigrants seeking asylum (because different rules apply for minors and adults)—could potentially look to this type of age cutoff test, too, with troubling results. Right now "people aren't trying to use magnetic resonance imaging

[to classify the age of refugees] but they are using x-ray imaging to look at bone age and make a determination as to whether they are children or not," says Babette Zemel, a pediatrics professor focused on child growth and development at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. "Looking at the bones can give you a good idea if one child is skeletally more mature, but it is insufficient for determining whether or not a child should be permitted to be on a sports team or claim asylum status because it doesn't tell you about their chronological age."

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Vatican toy story's sad ending stuff.co.nz

Dear Pope, please can we have our teddy bear back?

CATHERINE GROENESTEIN

Last updated 15:25, November 3 2016

Eltham Primary School teacher Heather Nicholls talks about the class teddy being stolen by a guard at the Vatican City. Children from Room 2 read letters they have written to the Pope about the missing bear.

His Holiness the Pope, the head of the Catholic Church and its 1.3bn followers, will soon be getting letters from some Taranaki six-year-olds asking him to return their kidnapped teddy bear.

The stuffed toy, owned by Room 2 in Eltham, was taken by an overzealous Vatican City guard last month.

Eltham Primary School teacher Heather Nicholls took the bear when she and her partner travelled to Europe on OE.



Catherine Groenestein Imogen Lynch, Layla Elliot and Lailanie Leighton, all six, of Room 2 at Eltham School are writing letters to the Pope after one of his guards kidnapped the class bear when teacher Heather Nicholls had it with her on a trip to the Vatican City.



Catherine Groenestein Room 2 at Eltham School have a selection of classroom teddies which they can cuddle and practice reading stories aloud to.

The idea was to photograph the teddy at various overseas locations to show the children on her return.

But the fun way to learn geography turned sour outside Pope Francis' living quarters.

"I'd taken photos at the Sistene Chapel with the bear and there were thousands of other people all taking photographs," Nicholls said.

"My partner was taking a photo of me holding the teddy on my shoulder. There was nothing threatening about it, but the guard came over and grabbed the teddy. "

She said at first the couple thought the man was willing to be in a photograph with them, but instead he snatched the toy away and threw it into a shed, and refused to give it back.

"I was just aghast, and everyone else around us was wondering what was going on. I hadn't done anything wrong," she said.

They spoke to the Italian security guard and an interpreter, who both tried to reason with the Swiss guard, but to no avail, and the couple left without the bear.

Back at school in Eltham, the children now know about the Vatican, but not for a good reason.

Bears are a big part of life in Room 2. The children like to cuddle and write stories about them.



Supplied Scotland Bear during a happier time on his trip to Italy. The bear from Room 2 at Eltham School was detained by a guard at Vatican City. .

Bears are good listeners for youngsters practising their reading, and sometimes the bears get to go home for a sleepover at someone's house.

Although she was able to buy a replacement for the lost bear when she was in Scotland on her way back, Nicholls said the children were quite upset by the fate of his predecessor.

"My children are really sad thinking about him all alone in that little shed," she said.

Five of the children have now written letters to His Holiness, telling him about their kidnapped teddy bear.

Others wrote stories about the mishap and they were read out in assembly, with a touching rendition of the Bear Hunt song, Nicholls said.

Layla Elliott said she felt so sad, she cried when she found out the bear was lost.

"Me too," Lailarnie Leighton added.

Imogen Lynch said the guard might have had other toys in his shed.

Attempts by Stuff to contact the Pope via Facebook and Twitter have been unsuccessful.

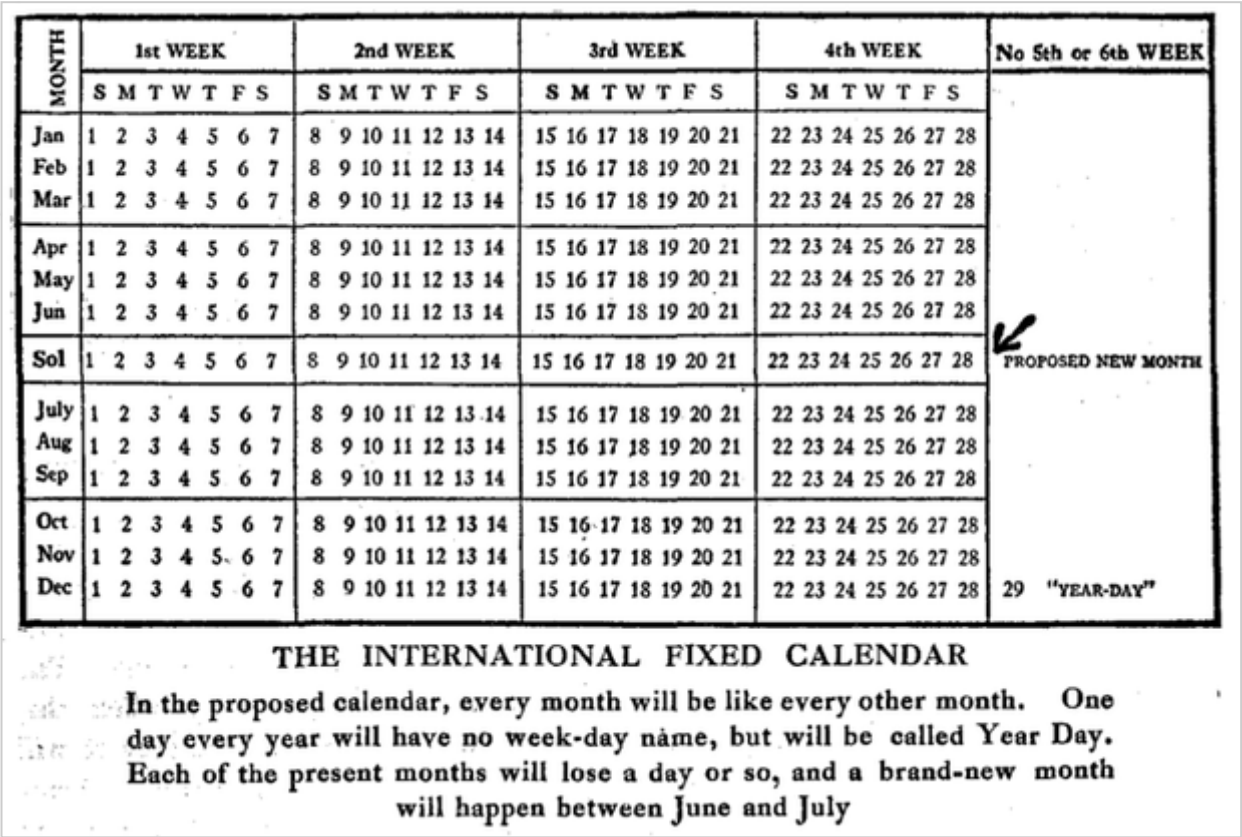
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From The Atlantic CITYLAB

The Death and Life of the 13-Month Calendar

Favored by leaders in transportation and logistics, the International Fixed Calendar was a favorite of Kodak founder George Eastman, whose company used it until 1989.

MARK BYRNES | @markbyrnes525 | Dec 11, 2014 | 42 Comments



MONTH	1st WEEK	2nd WEEK	3rd WEEK	4th WEEK	No 5th or 6th WEEK
	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	
Jan	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Feb	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Mar	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Apr	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
May	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Jun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Sol	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	PROPOSED NEW MONTH
July	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Aug	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Sep	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Oct	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Nov	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	
Dec	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	29 "YEAR-DAY"

THE INTERNATIONAL FIXED CALENDAR

In the proposed calendar, every month will be like every other month. One day every year will have no week-day name, but will be called Year Day. Each of the present months will lose a day or so, and a brand-new month will happen between June and July

George Eastman House

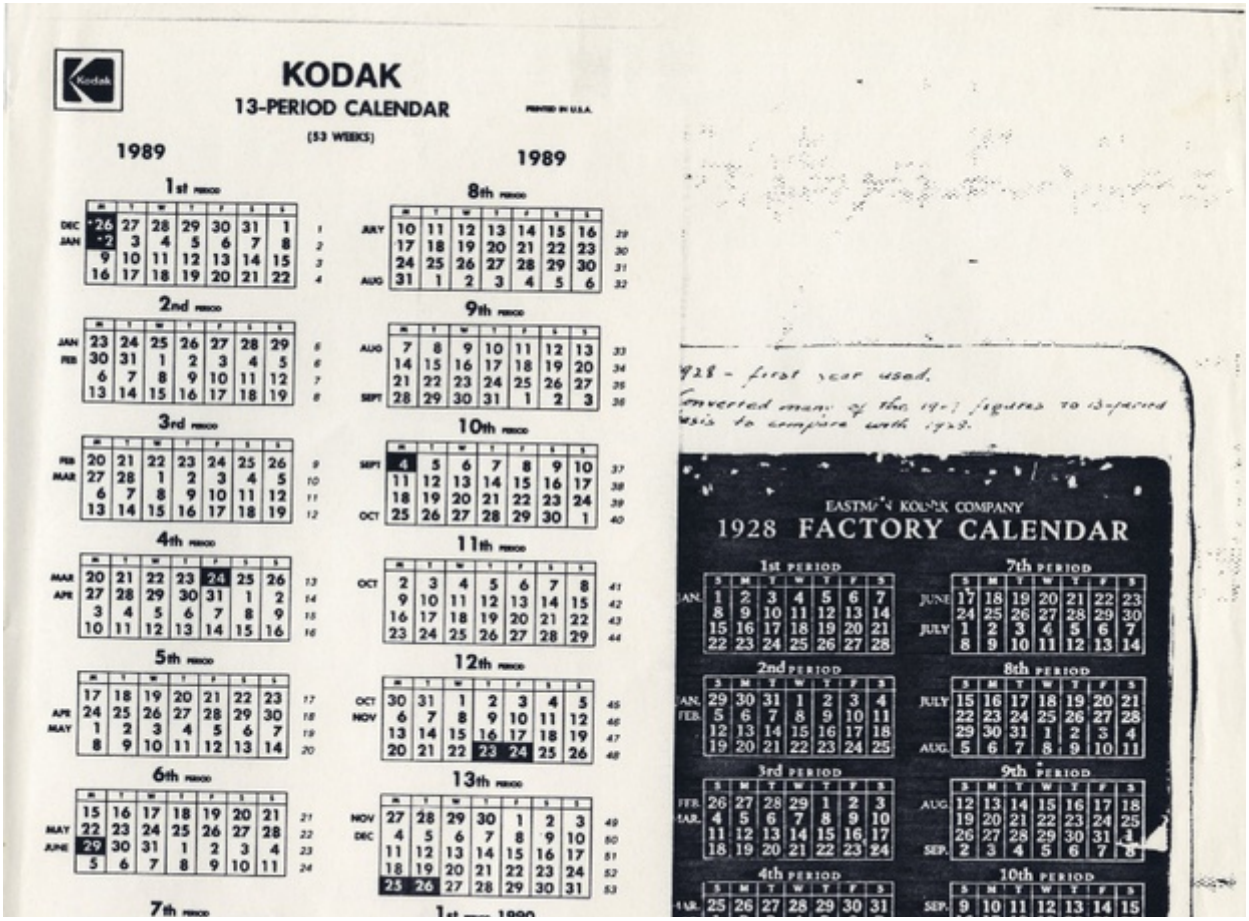
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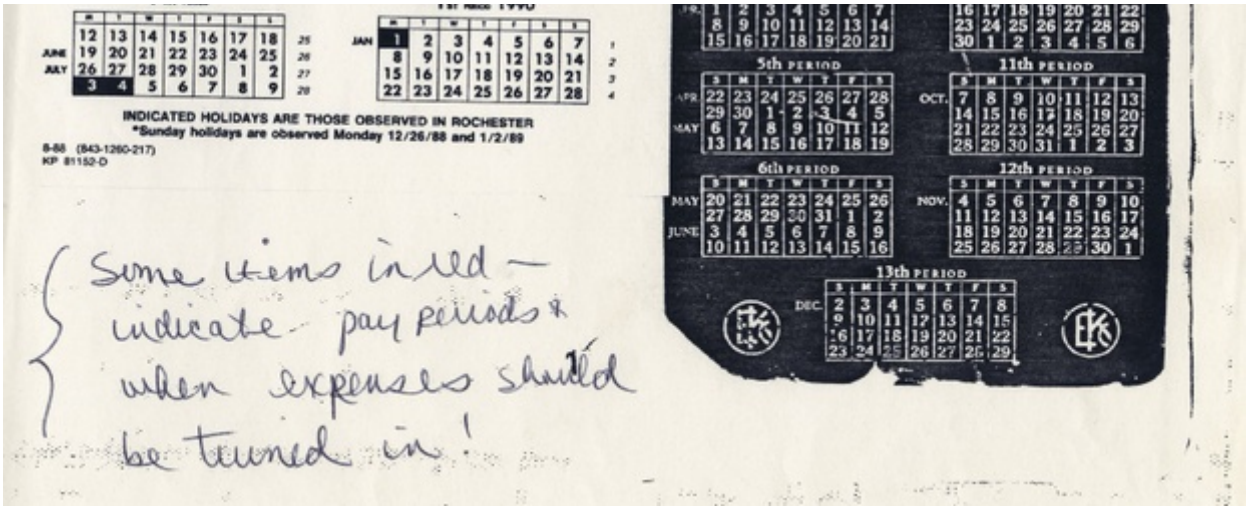
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In a scalding-hot argument against the 12-month calendar, a September 1927 issue of *The Outlook* proclaimed:

> A month is a wholly irrational division of time. It has no relation to anything in astronomy, or human experience. It is an inaccurate and varying measure of time that is a constant annoyance in business and a misleading unit in science. It has no religious significance.
>
> A month is nothing but just a bad habit.

Momentum behind the International Fixed Calendar, a 13-month calendar with 28 days in each month and a leftover day at the end of each year (it also followed the Gregorian rules with regards to Leap Years), was never stronger than in the late 1920s. Similar to Auguste Comte's positivist calendar (created in 1849), this particular 13-month invention came from the mind of Moses Cotsworth, a North Eastern Railway advisor bothered by inexplicably varying monthly earnings over the traditional 12-month period. Cotsworth's plan quickly gained popularity among businessmen, especially in transportation and logistics. His biggest ally however, was photography pioneer and Kodak founder, George Eastman.





The 13-month calendar as used by Kodak in 1928 and 1989. (Courtesy the George Eastman House)

By 1928, Kodak had implemented Costworth's calendar and Eastman himself took on the responsibility of promoting it to the world on his dime. Inside the same building that hosted Kodak's headquarters in Rochester, Eastman opened up a U.S. office for the International Fixed Calendar League (the IFCL's other office was in London). From there, the organization mailed out calendar propaganda to businesses around the country, "[Eastman] spent a lot of his own money creating publications so that everyone had something in writing about it," says George Eastman House curator, Kathy Connor.

Some of America's most respected businessmen were sold, their words of support published in *The Outlook*'s 1927 piece. Hotelier E.M. Statler was on board. So was shipping magnate Robert Dollar, as well as famed banker and philanthropist George Foster Peabody.

Cotsworth's creation came during an era in which industrialism had swept through much of the U.S. and Western Europe. From Frederick Taylor's introduction of scientific management to Albert Kahn's auto factories, modernism was changing the way people worked, thought, and lived. (It's worth noting that Eastman provided significant financial support to the American Eugenics Society as well). A plan to change the way people measure time was inevitable.

MONTH	1st WEEK	2nd WEEK	3rd WEEK	4th WEEK	5th WEEK	6th WEEK	MONTH
	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M	Saturdays
Jan	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	29 30 31		Jan
Feb	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10 11	12 13 14 15 16 17 18	19 20 21 22 23 24 25	26 27 28		Feb
Mar	1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 10 11	12 13 14 15 16 17 18	19 20 21 22 23 24 25	26 27 28 29 30 31		Mar
Apr	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12 13 14 15	16 17 18 19 20 21 22	23 24 25 26 27 28 29	30	Apr

May		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		May	
Jun						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Jun	
July								1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	July	s
Aug			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			Aug	
Sep						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		Sep	s
Oct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			Oct	
Nov				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			Nov	
Dec						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Dec	s

THE PRESENT CALENDAR

Everybody knows the vagaries of our present calendar. We have to have a new one every year. Nobody is ever sure until he has looked it up whether the first of the month falls in the beginning or the end of the week. Except for the calendar companies, it seems to work out to no one's advantage

MONTH	1st WEEK							2nd WEEK							3rd WEEK							4th WEEK							No 5th or 6th WEEK
	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
Jan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Feb	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Mar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Apr	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
May	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Jun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Sol	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	PROPOSED NEW MONTH
July	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Aug	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Sep	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Oct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Nov	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Dec	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29 "YEAR-DAY"

THE INTERNATIONAL FIXED CALENDAR

In the proposed calendar, every month will be like every other month. One day every year will have no week-day name, but will be called Year Day. Each of the present months will lose a day or so, and a brand-new month will happen between June and July

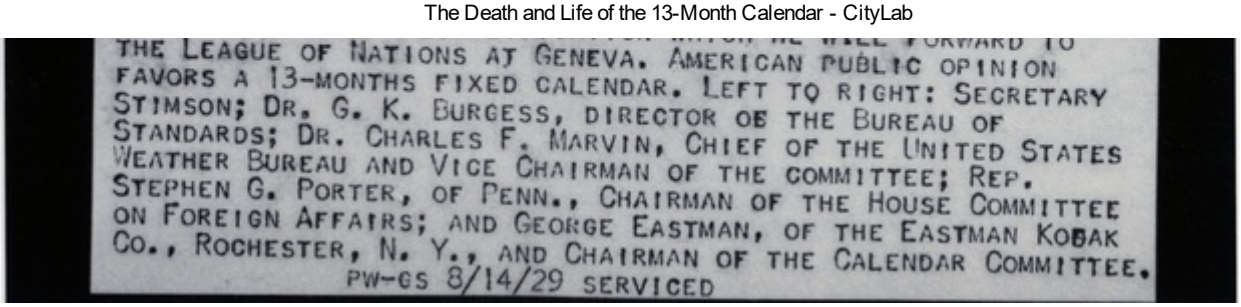
A 1927 issue of "The Outlook" compares the Gregorian calendar to the International Fixed Calendar. (Courtesy George Eastman House)

The 13-month calendar worked so well at Kodak that the company used it until 1989, 57 years after Eastman committed suicide (a businessman to the end, his ashes are buried at Kodak's old industrial complex). "I loved it," says John Cirocco, a former Kodak employee who worked at the company in the late '80s as a tech advisor. "It was a major piece of financial applications, and from a financial perspective it made the ability to compare sales periods a hell of a lot easier."

Besides the occasional carryover (Kodak's 1989 financial year began on December 26, 1988), overlapping a 13-month calendar with the Gregorian one came with surprisingly few hiccups. "After I got hired, it took about a week to adjust to," Cirocco tells us. "When I first got there they explained it to me and I was like, 'Oh, my God, this is brilliant!'" In fact, the former Kodak employee remains fond of the calendar to this day. "I've tried to recommend it at two places I've worked at since then. The feedback is always, 'We can't, this [12-month calendar] is how it's always been done.'"

The success of a 13-month calendar, however, depended on the non-business world's support. Before starting any lobbying efforts, Eastman first asked church leaders in Rochester for their approval. Agreeing that such a calendar would not compromise the integrity of any holy days (Easter would fall on April 15 every year on Cotsworth's calendar), they gave Eastman their blessing. "He felt comfortable committing to it once he knew the church wasn't against it," says Connor.





Col. Henry Stimson (left) holds the report of the National Committee on Calendar Simplification while standing next to George Eastman on August 14, 1929. (AP, George Eastman House)

Cotsworth's own efforts to promote his creation in the early 1900s came up short, with a 1914 conference on the matter cancelled due to the start of World War I, followed by a 1923 presentation to the League of Nations. By 1929, after Eastman had taken the torch for the calendar, a League of Nations special committee had narrowed down a field of 156 calendar proposals down to two, including Eastman's. With a decision still not made upon Eastman's suicide, the IFCL soon folded. The issue of developing a new calendar became less important as political tensions in Europe grew and eventually led to World War II. The League of Nations folded in 1946.

But even during Eastman's years active in the movement, advocates for the International Fixed Calendar struggled to sell it as a life necessity. Without any explanation, *The Outlook* wrote that such a plan "will benefit women." Since Cotsman's plan gives each month 28 days, the length of the average menstrual cycle, it's safe to assume the magazine's editors meant women would appreciate the direct overlap between an official month and a cycle. I emailed a modern woman I know about such claims. Already skeptical about a 13-month calendar created by industrialists, she sarcastically replied, "I have a perfect 28-day menstrual cycle synced with the moon. Thank the men for taking care of the calendar for us."

Besides a monthly Friday the 13th, perhaps the best example of why Cotsworth's plan would be hard to embrace is its impact on July 4th. While businesses can easily use 13 nameless 28-day periods, overlapping them with the standard 12-month calendar, the rest of the world would need a newly named month. Cotsworth's calendar had "Sol" between June and July. As the editors of *The Outlook* explain in 1927:

> If, for instance, we wish to keep Independence Day in July, then it will cease to be the fourth of July but become the second of July. If, however, we wish to keep it on virtually the same day of the year. Independence Day will fall into the new month. As July 4 will become Sol 17 and thus fall on Tuesday, Independence Day will then be shifted one day earlier and become Sol 16.

The article goes on to explain, "every holiday from Christmas around to Thanksgiving will find its most appropriate Monday." The International Fixed calendar sucked the personality out of marking time, making every week and month as predictable as humanly possible. No longer would a boss have to deal with the trivial disruption of workers getting an occasional Tuesday or Thursday holiday and possibly taking a few extra days off around it.

While the death of the calendar's biggest financier and proponent in 1932 also meant the death of the movement, Kodak's steady decline and eventual switch back to a 12-month system dug the International Fixed Calendar a deeper grave. Businessmen of any era might appreciate such a creation—former Kodakers like Cirocco are living testaments to that—but implementing the 13-month calendar on a national or global scale never seemed worth the disruption to people outside the worlds of industry and commerce. It still doesn't.

If a switch to the metric system appears too much to ask out of the U.S. today, imagine asking every country to change the way it tells time. It's an impossible feat that doesn't need pulling off and, thankfully, no one is trying to anymore.

Correction: *A previous version of this article incorrectly stated that Kodak implemented its 13-month calendar in 1924. It was implemented in 1928.*

About the Author



Mark Byrnes is a senior associate editor at CityLab who writes about design, history, and photography.

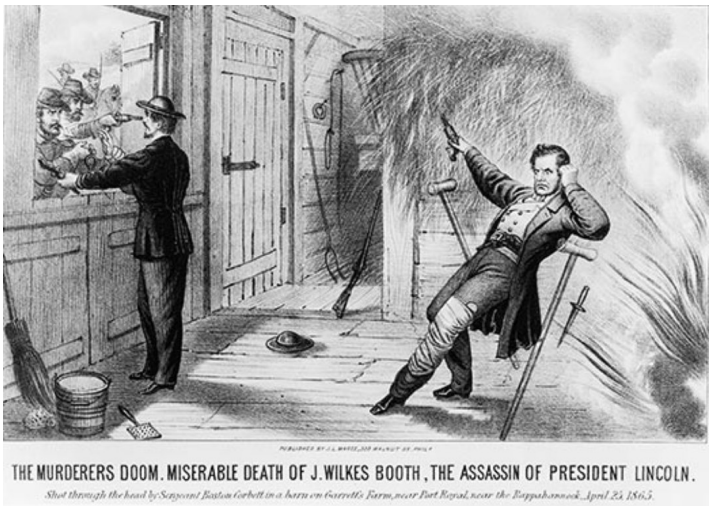
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Documenting the Death of an Assassin

smithsonianmag.com



The single autopsy photo of Booth has not been seen since April 27, 1865, and its whereabouts are unknown. (Getty Images)



On April 27, 1865—12 days after he shot Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.—Booth was shot in a Virginia barn. He died from his wound that day. (Getty Images)



Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ordered a single photograph be taken of John Wilkes Booth's corpse, says Bob Zeller, president of the Center for Civil War Photography. Most experts agree that famed Civil War photographer Alexander Gardner and his assistant Timothy O'Sullivan took the picture. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

In 1865, a single photograph was taken during the autopsy of John Wilkes Booth. Where is it now?

By Ashley Luthern
smithsonian.com
May 5, 2011

When President Barack Obama announced this week that he would not release postmortem pictures of Osama bin Laden, people around the world immediately questioned his decision.

The debate today echoes a similar controversy involving John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln.

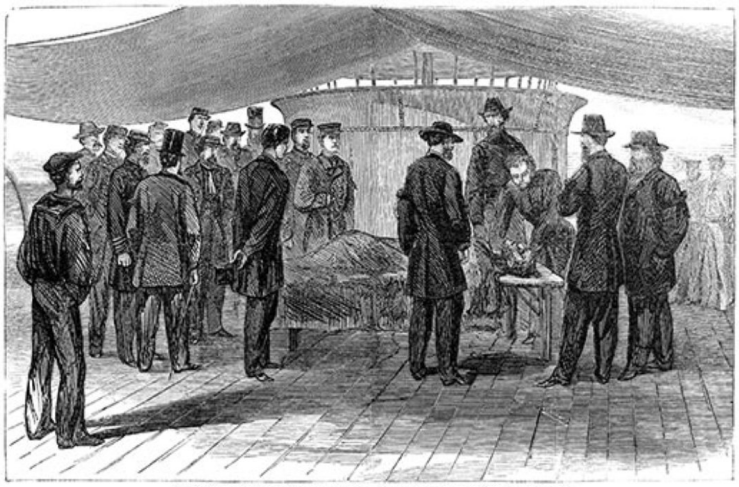
On April 26, 1865—12 days after he shot Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.—Booth himself was cornered and shot in a Virginia barn. He died from his wound that day. His body was taken back to Washington and then aboard the USS *Montauk* for an autopsy.

The administration, led by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, ordered that a single photograph be taken of Booth's corpse, says Bob Zeller, president of the Center for Civil War Photography. On April 27, 1865, many experts agree, famed Civil War photographer Alexander Gardner and his assistant Timothy O'Sullivan took the picture.

It hasn't been seen since, and its whereabouts are unknown.

"Stanton was a guy who really took charge," Zeller says. And in this case, Zeller says, he was "trying to control photographs of Booth's body so he would not be a martyr or lionized." In the short term, however, the absence of the image buoyed conspiracy theories that Lincoln's assassin was still alive.

The Booth photo wasn't the first image that Stanton would have censored. The war



This engraving of Booth's autopsy is from Harper's Weekly. Zeller points to it as another piece of evidence for the Booth photo. In the engraving, Zeller identified Gardner as one of the people around the body. (The Granger Collection, NYC)

secretary was incensed after a photograph of Lincoln's body in its casket, taken as the slain president lay in Governor's Room at New York City Hall, was printed in the evening editions of New York newspapers, Zeller writes in *The Blue and Gray in Black and White: A History of Civil War Photography*.

"I cannot sufficiently express my surprise and disapproval of such an act while the body was in your charge," Stanton wrote to Gen. Edward D. Townsend, who assisted with Lincoln's funeral. "...You will direct the provost-marshal to go to the photographer, seize and destroy the plates and any pictures or engravings that may have been made, and consider yourself responsible if the offense is repeated."

The Booth controversy arose soon afterward, when the *New York Tribune* reported on April 28 that a photograph of Booth's body had been taken aboard the *Montauk*.

A crucial account of what happened while Gardner and O'Sullivan were on the ship, Zeller says, comes from James A. Wardell, a former government detective who had been assigned to accompany the two men. Wardell's account, given in 1896 to a historian who was searching for the missing Booth photograph, appears in *Witness to an Era: The Life and Photographs of Alexander Gardner*, by D. Mark Katz:

> *Under no circumstances was I to allow him or his assistant out of my sight until they had taken a picture and made the print, and then I was to bring the print and the glass [negative] back to the War Department and give it only to Col. [L.C.] Baker [chief of the Secret Service] or Secretary of War Stanton. ...[Gardner] was told that only one plate was to be made and it was to have only one print made and both were to be given to me when finished….*
>
> *"Gardner took the plate and then gave it to the assistant and told him to take it and develop it and to make one print. I went with him and even went into the dark room. About 4:00 in the afternoon I got the plate and the print from the assistant and took it to the War Department. I went in to the outer office and Col. Baker was just coming out of the War Office. I gave him the plate and print and he stepped to one side and pulled it from the envelope. He looked at it and then dismissed me.*

Wardell said he doubted the historian would be able to track down the picture: "The War Department was very determined to make sure that Booth was not made a hero and some rebel would give a good price for one of those pictures of the plate."

There the trail of the photograph goes cold. But that doesn't mean it won't warm up someday, Zeller says.

"That's the reason why I'm so absolutely passionate about the field of Civil War photography," he says. "You keep making huge finds. You can't say it won't happen. You can't even say that it's not

sitting ... in the National Archives War Department records."

Edward McCarter, supervisor of the still photography collection at the National Archives, says the photo is not there, as far as he knows. He'd never even heard of such a photograph—and given how often and how long researchers have been using the photographs and textual records in the Archives, "I'm sure it would have surfaced."

Smithsonian



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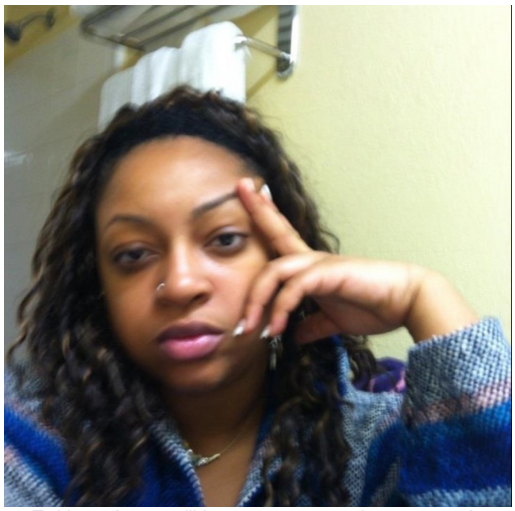
Woman in ‘demon assassin’ case found criminally insane in her children’s deaths

By Dan Morse
September 15 at 8:14 PM

washingtonpost.com

The Washington Post

Zakieya Avery will be sent to a maximum-security psychiatric hospital, not a prison, after a judge ruled she was criminally insane in the killing of two of her children. (N/A/Family Photo) All Comments Like Reply Share Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Like Reply Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Like Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Like Reply Like Reply Like Reply Share Like Reply Like



Zakieya Avery will be sent to a maximum-security psychiatric hospital, not a prison, after a judge ruled she was criminally insane in the killing of two of her children. (N/A/Family Photo)

A Maryland judge ruled Thursday that Zakieya Avery, a 31-year-old woman who called herself a demon assassin, was criminally insane when she killed her two youngest children in 2014 during what she believed was an exorcism.

The ruling — holding that Avery was not criminally responsible for the attacks — means that she will be sent to a maximum-security psychiatric hospital, not a prison.

Avery showed little emotion after the finding and did not look up as she was led out of the Montgomery County courtroom.

Several family members in attendance expressed visible relief. “It is bittersweet,” Kaliha Brooks said afterward. “We still lost the children. But we are happy to know my cousin will get the help she needs.”

On Monday, Avery admitted in court that she killed her 18-month-old son, Norell, and 2-year-old daughter, Zyana, and tried to kill her 5-year-old daughter, Taniya, and 8-year-old son, Martello.

The horrifying violence — carried out in the early hours of Jan. 17, 2014, in a Germantown townhouse by Avery and her roommate, Monifa Sanford — drew national attention. The women attacked the children with a serrated paring knife, stabbing the youngest more than 20 times, because they thought the killings would cleanse the children of demons and send them to heaven.

Avery, who has a history of mental health issues, put forward a defense through her attorney this week that she was not criminally responsible at the time of the attacks, leading to the bench trial over whether she was criminally insane.

“Her mission and plan were quite convoluted, disjointed and elaborate,” Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge Terrence McGann said Thursday. “I find her statements inconsistent with a rational brain.”

“The inescapable conclusion I draw,” he added, “is that she believed she was providing for her children’s salvation. What rational normal-thinking human being could possibly conclude that their children would be better off dead than alive?”

Under Maryland law, Avery could be released from a psychiatric hospital if she is deemed to not be a risk to herself or to others. McGann seemed leery of such a move, noting that about a month before the crimes, Avery quit taking her psychiatric medication — apparently because she thought God had cured her.

“Someday the defendant will be asking this court to release her from a psychiatric institution,” McGann said. “If the only guarantee this court has that Ms. Avery won’t slaughter other children in the future is her compliance with a strict regimen of anti-psychotic medication, I don’t foresee that day when this member of the court will take that risk.”

After police took Avery and Sanford into custody on the day of the attacks, the women spoke openly about their beliefs in demons and exorcisms — statements that were at the core of mental health issues that had to be sorted in their cases.

[Can one suspect be insane but the other not?]

Later in 2014, each woman was evaluated independently at the state’s Clifton T. Perkins forensic psychiatric hospital in Jessup. The big legal questions turned on what their mental state was at the time of the crimes. Were they so delusional they didn’t know their actions were wrong? And was their mental illness so severe that it overran any rational thoughts, leaving it impossible for the women to “conform” their conduct “to the requirements of law.”

The state doctors concluded that the answer for Sanford on both fronts was yes. They designated her “not criminally responsible.” A Montgomery judge agreed at a hearing in January 2015 and ordered Sanford’s confinement at Perkins.

But the doctors reached a different conclusion on Avery, saying that she knew what she did was illegal because, among other factors, she took steps to evade consequences — by running out the back of her townhouse — after the crime.

But Avery’s attorney, Brian Shefferman, challenged that opinion and retained two defense experts.

“The only way to understand her actions in this case is to factor in her mental illness, her delusional belief that her children were being possessed by demons,” one of those experts, psychiatrist Neil Blumberg, testified in court. “She clearly at the time thought that this was the proper and moral thing to do.”

[Mother pleads guilty to killing her two children]

“It’s a tragic case,” Shefferman said after the judge’s ruling Thursday. “I think the judge made the right call. She belongs in a hospital, not a prison.”

McGann spoke from the bench for 20 minutes — outlining Maryland’s criminal insanity statutes, Avery’s past mental illness, her descent into complete madness, and the brutality she and Sanford showed in the killings.

Arriving at a legal insanity ruling is a two-step process in Maryland, McGann noted. First, the courts must determine whether a person committed the crime. If so, and if the defendant raises the insanity defense, the courts must determine whether that defense is valid.

The bar the defendant must clear to show insanity is preponderance of the evidence, which is a lower standard than proof beyond a reasonable doubt. “A defendant must prove that it is more likely so than not so,” McGann said.

He keyed in what motives were absent in the Avery case. Among them: Avery had no apparent anger problems and no resentment toward the children, and she wasn’t high on hallucinogenic drugs. To her, demon possession and exorcisms became a very real motive, McGann said.

He spoke about Avery’s belief that demons can enter people through their eyes, penetrate their souls and, without an exorcism, can pull people to hell.

McGann read from writings that police found inside Avery’s townhouse. The women had written love notes to imagined spouses, made “dark apocalyptic assertions,” wrote a grocery list for a demon assassin party and advanced general comments on society.

McGann recited one of the entries that covered “the president and first lady being shape shifters, the antichrist’s messenger as the pope, a plan for the world, tracking devices and the hidden occult, the whore of Babylon and the beast of Babylon.”

In court, McGann also spoke of how the children died. As young as Norell was, the judge said, “he instinctively mustered the strength to fight his mother. This was evidenced by defensive wounds on his tiny hands and fingers.”

“What delusional thinking overpowered Ms. Avery to cause her to choke Zyana unconscious, and then [stab] her pristine chest 13 times?”

McGann also wondered “what distorted thoughts” caused Avery to stab the older children after they were awakened by the stabbing of their siblings.

“I find that Ms. Avery’s ritualistic, albeit barbaric, attempt to rid her children of demons, is powerful evidence of her lack of rational thinking,” McGann said.

Comments
Follow @morsedan
Older and Wiser
6:58 PM PDT
it's banita jacks all over again . . . horrifying and sad . . . leaves one entirely despondent, thinking about those children's last few moments
redskins.fan
4:30 AM PDT
Maybe she can join Hinkley in Williamsburg in a few years....more
MsTyque
9/15/2016 10:20 PM PDT
What does it say about the world when people still believe in "demons" in 2016?...more
P Sasso
2:01 AM PDT
...that the world hasn't changed in thousands of years. At least now this woman will receive treatment and support in a regulated facility with trained staff and safety protocols. That wouldn't have been necessarily true less than a century ago. I wish both the remaining children, and her, some measure of peace.
lethemeatcake1
Alwayzblessed29
9/15/2016 6:23 PM PDT
It's easy for people to make assumptions based on their own biast without knowing the victims, the accused or the family.
rosedaleresident
6:00 AM PDT
bias*...more
Skyline1
9/15/2016 2:39 PM PDT
She's likely no more or less insane than the hundreds of other people who have killed, tortured, or starved their own children, children of someone they are living with, or children they don't even know.

What got this murderer confinement in a psychiatric hospital instead of prison is "that she believed she was providing for her childrens’ salvation." Courts fall for this religious stuff all too often. There's honestly no excuse for anyone believing in this demon possession myth and it should not be used as an excuse.
Alwayzblessed29
9/15/2016 6:22 PM PDT
The only problem with your statement is that your insinuating that the court made a ruling based on fabricated delusions in order to escape the prosecution of a prison sentence; that is simply not true.
RightSideOfHistory
9/15/2016 1:39 PM PDT
"Woman in ‘demon assassin’ case found criminally insane in her children’s deaths"

Duh!

I hope she gets the help she needs!!!
ariellem1
Leon Trotsky
9/15/2016 12:53 PM PDT
Leftist judges are out of control.
rosedaleresident
9/15/2016 1:08 PM PDT

While you may be correct in your assertion, Judge McGann is probably one of the most conservative judges on the bench in MD. He is far from the left and is not shy about letting you know. This was a sound finding from an experienced judge whose political leanings had nothing to do with his decision.
starling1 and SubtleAs2
starling1
9/15/2016 1:15 PM PDT
GOPers call everything they don't agree with leftist.
ariellempmath and RightSideOfHistory3
Davoud
9/15/2016 1:16 PM PDT
That's Neo-Nazi for "Justice has been served."
RightSideOfHistory
9/15/2016 1:39 PM PDT
Moroness!!!...more
rileycasey
9/15/2016 11:31 AM PDT
Why is this kind of superstition perfectly fine when a pope or a televangelist does it but insanity when a suburban mom exhibits it? All this mumbo jumbo is so confusing....more
NikNY and pmath2
starling1
9/15/2016 1:16 PM PDT
The pope or televangelist do not kill. By the way, when is the last time a pope conducted an exorcism?
melaniebose1
rileycasey
9/15/2016 5:23 PM PDT
Ahhhh Now this is where you turn off the computer and open up a history book.
rosedaleresident
6:09 AM PDT
There is at least one televangelist in the past decade I recall being charged with murder, and several popes have been responsible for murder.
Davoud
9/15/2016 1:16 PM PDT
Who said that popes and televangelists are mentally stable?
concernedcit1
9/15/2016 11:25 AM PDT
She's cute, but crazy as hell.
B-flat
9/15/2016 11:14 AM PDT [Edited]
The husband of my wife's first cousin stabbed her 33 times -- to death in 1995. He was found not guilty due to insanity. The irony is, that two state psychiatrists testified that he was sane, but the defense's board-certified $500 per hour shrink said he was insane. The judge, Michael Mason, believed the defense. The state was now on the hook to treat this killer even though they thought him sane at the time. That was 21 years ago, and he's still an inmate in the secure section of the Clifton T. Perkins Hospital Center in Baltimore. Our guess is that if was sane at the time, he's probably certifiably crazy by now. He's in his late 70's.
The Ultimate Avenger
9/15/2016 12:09 PM PDT [Edited]
That's the irony in all this. Being found not guilty by reason of insanity (NGRI), an affirmative defense used roughly 2% of the time at most in a state like VA, can actually ADD to the time you're locked away. Even in the rare case someone might be found NGRI instead of guilty, they still have an entire process to go through that in many cases takes years, more than if they'd plead guilty. That's why I'm a fan of NGRI. Either they really need the help or they may end up outsmarting themselves into what is effectively a longer sentence. In the changes that came out from the Hinckley trial, the court systems and the state hospitals where the NGRIs are locked up have a lot more control over their day to day lives.
GabsDaD
9/15/2016 9:42 AM PDT
Same story over and over and over, but we still reflexively believe kids are better with their mother than father.
DCportia

9/15/2016 10:09 AM PDT
Yeah, what's with the never-ending reports of demonic ritualistic child killings by mentally ill mothers? When will it stop?
Ace Witherspoon and pmath2
DGWann
9/15/2016 11:13 AM PDT
Who said the various sperm donors were even around?
tinamillardva1
SilkkyFire
9/15/2016 7:03 PM PDT [Edited]
True, as we never hear about fathers killing their children, right? I guess the one we all read a couple days ago about a young guy in MN who punched his newborn in the face repeatedly till she died--a mirage, maybe?

No, this is a human problem. Shocking and depressing. Just when you think you've heard the most awful thing imaginable, there is a new story to make your heart ache. I sometimes wonder how we've survived this long as a species.
Walker - Fairfax Ranger
9/15/2016 8:46 AM PDT
Guess she's free to go live with Jon Hinckley and his mom.
cmckeonjr
9/15/2016 9:08 AM PDT
"The ruling . . . means that she will be sent to a maximum-security psychiatric hospital."
See More
Anon_ymous and MarjieCat2
Rimfire
9/15/2016 9:30 AM PDT
Surprised you are not giving us metrics on stabbings in the UK and Germany....more
Leon Trotsky1

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demonsanddemonolatry.com



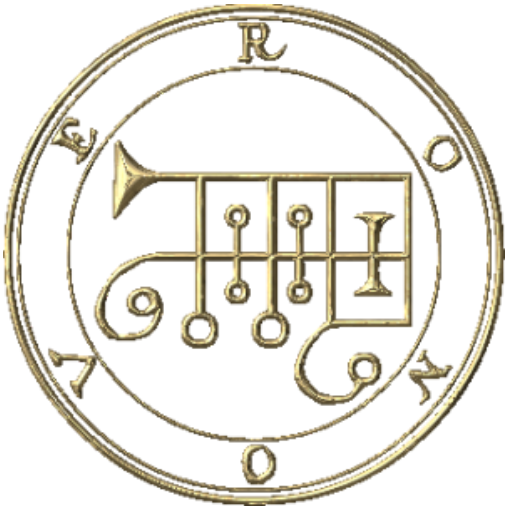
Demon Encyclopedia

December 20, 2014 admin 3 Comments

Demon of the Day … Marquis Ronove (Day Demon)

Dates: December 13th – December 21st (Day Time)
Direction: East
Tarot: 10 of Wands
Planet: Moon
Metal: Silver
Element: Air (Under Goap)
Color: Violet (Purple)
Plant: Cinnamon
Incense: Jasmine
Zodiac: Sagittarius

Demonic Enn: Kaymen vefa Ronove



Ronove Sigil

Original text from the Ars Goetia:

"The Twenty-seventh Spirit is Ronove. He appeareth in the Form of a Monster. He teacheth the Art of Rhetoric very well and giveth Good Servants, Knowledge of Tongues, and Favours with Friends or Foes. He is a Marquis and Great Earl; and there be under his command 19 Legions of Spirits."

From the Luciferian Goetia by Michael Ford

"He is a Great Earl and Marquis whom inspires a comprehension of learning within the circle. Ronove is an excellent Familiar which brings instinctual knowledge via waking and dreaming of the Alphabet of Desire, the language of the subconscious which empowers spells and talismans."

From the Daemonolatry Goetia by S. Connolly

"The Daemon of knowledge and wisdom in the Dukante Hierarchy. Ronove can also be invoked to cause people to see your way of thinking or feel the need to help you. Be careful of invoking Ronove to control others because it will often turn into a lesson for your benefit."

From Pseudomonarchia Daemonum (Liber officiorum spirituum) by Johann Weyer

"(25) Ronove [Roneve] a Marquis and an Earl, he resembles a monster, he brings singular understanding in rhetoric. He gives faithfull servants, and has knowledge of languages. He brings favours of friends and foes. He has 19 legions under him."

3 thoughts on "Demon of the Day…. Marquis Ronove"

1. **Jenna Martin**
September 10, 2015 at 2:49 am

What does it mean by "known demons"? Does that mean they are the only ones that have associations linked to them? (elements, tarot, etc)

1. **admin**
May 5, 2016 at 8:05 pm

Hi Jenna, Known demons are demons that have been discovered and documented, there are actually many more demons out there. The Spiritual world is a huge place and many people have personal demon guides and companions who walk with them in their life.

2. **Leonardo Guerrero**
September 29, 2015 at 7:11 pm

How convocar this demon. I want to see please

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ANCIENT MAGIC

Archaeologists discover 2,000-year-old scrolls with demon-invoking magic spells
August 10, 2016

- http://theweek.com/speedreads/642013/archaeologists-discover-2000yearold-scrolls-demoninvoking-magic-spells
- https://twitter.com/STcom/status/763014516133158912/photo/1

Archaeologists have discovered what they believe to be 2,000-year-old "spells" etched onto tiny rolls of gold and silver, uncovered alongside skeletons in northeastern Serbia. But as archaeologists attempt to decipher the language on the magic scrolls, they admit to not knowing if the spells were intended for good or for evil.

"We read the names of a few demons that are connected to the territory of modern-day Syria," archaeologist Ilija Danković told Reuters.

The scrolls were discovered inside two lead amulets, and appear to have been similar in use to "binding magic" practiced in other cultures. Such charms were typically buried with people who had died violently because the "souls of such people took longer to find rest and had a better chance of finding demons and deities and pass the wishes to them so they could do their magic," Danković said.





The Straits Times ✓@STcom
Mystery magic spells unearthed with ancient skeletons in #Serbia http://str.sg/4T6B
7:10 AM - 9 Aug 2016
18 18 Retweets 16 16 likes

Binding magic could be used to make someone fall in love, but it could also be used for "dark, malignant curses, to the tune of 'May your body turn dead, as cold and heavy as this lead,'" Danković

said.

For the time being, the purpose of the spells remains a mystery and it may never be fully understood; while the alphabet is written in Greek letters, the language is Aramaic. "It's a Middle Eastern mystery to us," Miomir Korać, the chief archaeologist at the site, told Reuters.

Jeva Lange





The Demonization of Pan.

Kevin Hearne (c) 1998

> Midas, no longer lured by dreams of riches,
> Took to the woods, became a nature-lover;
> He worshipped Pan... (Ovid 303).

Such a mention of the ancient Greek god, Pan, hardly seems threatening. It certainly does not suggest that Pan was evil incarnate—yet by approximately 300 C.E., the demonization of Pan had begun, and it continued until the western world largely associated images of Pan with the devil. To the Greeks, Pan was a shepherd: he was half goat and half man, a thing of nature—certainly not the Antichrist or a being who was out to corrupt and steal men's souls. He was lusty; he played pipes and was therefore musical; and he was a god of nature. And though much is made in schools and textbooks of the major Olympian gods—Zeus and the gang—it is clear from archaeological evidence that Pan was the favorite god of the Greek people. "It's a fact that there are more dedications to him than to any other..." (Pitt-Kethley xi). Perhaps this is what led Christian theologians to demonize Pan; they sensed a powerful competitor for the hearts of the people. This demonization was no accident, but rather a deliberate twisting of pagan ideals as Christianity spread its influence throughout Europe. After the Council of Nicea issued the Nicene Creed and the Roman Catholic Church was established in 325 C.E., Christian theologians (beginning with Eusebius) transformed Pan from a benign nature god to Satan—the great Adversary.

There is some evidence to the contrary—that in fact, Pan went the other way, and was associated with Jesus Christ. The connection may not be apparent at first: how can a "minor" god of the sizable Greek pantheon have anything to do with the central figure of a monotheistic, eschatological religion? The mere suggestion of this would get someone burned at the stake during the Spanish Inquisition. But the similarities are there. For example, they were both shepherds, after a fashion. Also, neither of them were entirely divine: Jesus was supposed to be one hundred percent divine and one hundred percent human simultaneously, and Pan was likewise a god and "also an earthly being, by virtue of his mother Dryope, his occupation, and his association with man. This fusion of the human and divine in one creature has led many later Christian poets—most notably Milton—to describe Pan as a pagan prefiguration of Jesus Christ" (Baker 11). The crucial point here, however, is that such comparisons were made by poets—and mostly poets who lived after the Reformation—not by priests or bishops of the Church and certainly not by any of the popes.

The obvious problem with comparing Pan to Jesus, in the Church's view, would be Pan's incredible virility. Jesus was never portrayed as a sexual being, and to this day people still feel traces of guilt about sex, as if it were an unholy act. Pan was unabashedly libidinous. A survey of statuary and bas-relief sculpture conducted by Fiona Pitt-Kethley left no doubt of this. In almost every instance she recorded, Pan's manhood was fully aroused, "though never Priapically endowed" (xiii). With depictions such as these, Pan's image was obviously as far away from that of Jesus as another deity could get. No member of the clergy would ever dare to draw comparisons between them when the contrast was so evident, so the poets were alone in raising Pan to a Christ figure.

But what is it about sexuality that makes Christianity so afraid of it, besides the fact that Jesus didn't seem to have any? One scholar believes that since Pan was "a phallic deity like his father [Hermes], he represented sexual desire, which can be both creative and destructive" (Russell 126). The Church still preaches loudly about the destructive power of sexual immorality, and pretty much leaves the creative aspect of it for granted. Since Pan's sexual nature was so evident, this might explain the Church's readiness to hold up Pan as an example of profound moral turpitude. "Sexual passion, which suspends reason and easily leads to excess, was alien...to the asceticism of the Christians; a god of sexuality could easily be assimilated to the principle of evil" (Russell 126). Pan's sexuality, when combined with his unwholesome visage, thus gave the ascetics exactly what they needed. Since he had never been attractive to begin with, and Christians were wont to associate ugliness with evil (deformations and plagues of all kinds were seen as a punishment from God for sins committed), Pan became

the image of the devil. Pan's entire physique was so gruesome to behold that the Church could almost point to Pan and say, "This is what happens to the sexually immoral."

Pan wasn't the only pagan god getting his name besmirched at first. Believing in only one God and forsaking all others, Christians had a tendency to equate all pagan deities with demons. Eusebius, writing in the early fourth century, was the first to take aim specifically at Pan. In responding to Plutarch's account of Pan's "death" during the reign of Tiberius (who reigned during the time of Jesus' crucifixion), Eusebius interpreted the story as evidence that God had rid humankind of its biggest demon. "As the pagan deities were demons, in the Christian view, Eusebius'�equating Pan with the daemon, seems natural and unforced" (Merivale 13). By the time of Eusebius, it might well have been natural to make such an equation; but according to *A History of the Devil*, such slander would have been impossible without the emergence of the Septuagint and the concept of a devil, period:

> The concept of the Devil was also aided by the development of the concept of evil demons. At first, demons are morally ambivalent like the gods. Then two groups of demons are distinguished, one good and the other evil. Finally, a shift in vocabulary occurs. In the Septuagint, the good spirits are called angels and the evil spirits demons�wholly evil spiritual beings. These are now easily amalgamated with the Devil, either lending their traits to him, or being spirits subordinate to him (Russell 170).

It is not difficult to see here how Pan's rampant sexuality�so sinful to Christians�made him an ideal candidate for demonization. This defamation of a once pastoral god was part of a vast campaign of religious propaganda designed to put the fear of the devil (where the fear of God didn't seem to work) in the people's hearts�for Christianity had several pantheons of old gods to conquer, and a personification of evil was efficacious in helping the process along. Thanks to Christianity, Pan literally became the world's biggest scapegoat.

The conversion of pagan Europe to Christianity took up most of the first millennium; history shows that pagan converts had problems assimilating the ideas that violence and sensual pleasure were sinful. The former is certainly obvious in the evangelical methodology of Olaf Trygvesson, king of Norway in 999 CE: "All Norway will be Christian or die" (Reston 30), he said. However, the forcible conversion of the populace was being mirrored elsewhere at the same time, and the old cycle of violence (burn, rape, and pillage one's way to the throne) that had ruled since ancient times was curtailed enough so that civilization could begin. "The last apocalypse was a process rather than a cataclysm. It had the suddenness of forty years. Limited to Europe, its drama lay in the deliverance from terror rather than terror itself" (Renton 277). But while Christianity might have been mildly effective in blunting Europe's taste for violence, it is clear that it had (and still has) difficulty blunting human sexuality. With Pan and the other pagan gods, sexuality had always been something to be enjoyed�and people took great delight in imitating the gods. Trying to quell one's desires and imitate the celibacy of Jesus was therefore a bit too much to ask�even simply confining sexuality to marriage was (and is) a problem. No one felt this more keenly, apparently, than St. Augustine of Hippo, who rails at length in his *Confessions* about the perils of sexuality. He was the first to demonize Pan specifically for his sexuality (approximately 400 C.E.), going beyond the general Christian tendency to equate pagan deities with demons on general principle. "Saint Augustine�first mentioned the existence of incubi, which he thought to be forest deities; Augustine had spun both them and the succubi out of such Hellenic holdovers as Pan and his Dryads as well as other nymphs" (Massadie 275). Augustine's ideas were brought to America by the Puritans centuries later; they thought that the devil, horned and goat-footed, actually lived in the forest around Plymouth. Of course, the myth of his deviltry was widely spread and emphasized throughout the Middle Ages. The Church did propagate the image of Pan as the devil to give an ugly face to all of Satan's temptations, but they were primarily concerned with snuffing out the libidinous nature of the populace�else why not choose an even uglier creature to symbolize ultimate evil? "The devil was everywhere, carved on cathedral doors and pulpit pediments, always with the same Pan-like body...an image that, in this era torn between ribaldry and Gnostic mysticism, betrayed and obvious obsession with sex" (Massadie 275). As time went on, Pan's image as the devil continued to be reinforced--especially during the Renaissance, when ancient Greek and Roman gods regained some of their fame for awhile. The Church was anxious to prevent Pan from slipping back into his harmless nature, and so commissioned works of art appropriately: "Pan's knobbly horns...took on a newly, diabolic meaning in Christian art...such examples are not "misinterpretations" of classical content but purposeful...Christian diabolization of pagan forms" (Camille 103). This Pan-like image of Satan persists in fundamental denominations today, and can be seen in comic adaptations of C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. A horned, goat-footed devil appeared in the movie *Legend*, and doubtless such caricatures pop up in horror movies as well. These silly ideas about the Pan-

like image of Satan are all thanks to the pioneering efforts of Eusebius and Augustine, whose ideas were perpetuated and embellished by a horde of subsequent zealous clergymen.

The Christian demonization of a randy but otherwise benign nature god seems quite clear to one living in a secular century, and it must have been irritating to those who believed in him if they realized the purpose behind it at the time. From all ancient sources and archaeological evidence, Pan was obviously a greatly revered, rather than greatly feared, being at one point. It was only the ascetic values of the Judeo-Christian tradition that doomed him to play the role of the ultimate bad guy. Indeed, "it is a strange comment on a changed morality that this god... should have been turned by the Christian theologians into a devil" (Woods 86), for he was the god of all nature, and thus behaving naturally—not as the incarnation of evil.

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Video: Pakistani man drives destroyed Toyota Corolla down highway

BY Dan Gessner nydailynews.com

BY Dan Gessner
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
Friday, November 11, 2016, 11:00 AM

We've seen people driving down the highway on the rim of their wheel and guys substituting their rear wheels with a floor jack, but we've yet to see someone take a car on the freeway that has been demolished in every sense of the word. This is one of the cars from the horrific accidents they show you pictures of in Driver's Ed to scare you into staying under the speed limit. However, some genius took one of them that was somehow still "running" and decided that wherever he had to get to couldn't wait. When the cabin of your car basically doesn't exist, it's time to face facts and label it totaled, sir.

This mangled tenth generation Corolla only proves the fact that Toyotas don't die. I've known it since I was passed down a '97 Rav4 for my first car in high school. Convinced it was on its last legs, I looked forward to it finally dying so that my parents could start looking for another car. However, every time it wouldn't start it turned out to just be a replaceable belt, easily fixable battery connection or a bad plug wire. So although this guy's car may be virtually undrivable, someone needs to put out a warning to the rest of Pakistan's motorists because he won't be stopping anytime soon.



When you should've checked the Consumer Reports.

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Devil Dog of the Docks: Who's afraid of Hull's big bad wolf?

September 11th 2016

hulldailymail.co.uk

By Hull Daily Mail | Posted: December 13, 2015



BEAST OF EAST HULL: The dog was seen on moonlit nights at King George Dock.

*The Devil Dog of the Docks was once one of Hull's best-known urban legends. **Paul Johnson** talks to historian **Mike Covell** about a story that made headlines around the world.*

It was the size of a wolf and had a terrible stare. It moved silently and had the qualities of a ghost, appearing and disappearing at will. Witnesses walking late at night saw it hunting for prey, its horrible visage lit up by the moon.

Those willing to risk their lives could find its lair in a patch of woodland near King George Dock in east Hull. But locals were told to beware, because this Devil Dog of the Docks had already killed at least once.

A century ago this story caused a sensation in newspapers around the world and became one of Hull's most talked-about urban legends. Over the years, the tale has been lost to the sands of time, but continues to intrigue local historian Mike Covell.

"The docks of Hull are full of traditions, superstitions and stories," he said. "Some of them have been remembered and passed on from generation to generation, but others have been lost in the rich history of Hull's fishing heritage.

"When King George Dock opened in 1914, it was linked to Hull by the rail network, but at the time it was essentially a very rural area with the fields of Holderness a short distance away. It was here in 1934 that people began reporting sightings of a large, unexplained wolfhound roaming the docks.

"But what caused a sensation is when the dog was linked to the death of a sailor, Frank Robinson, who had mysteriously been found drowned in the dock."

Aerial view showing rural surroundings of King George Dock in the first half of the 20th century

A report in the Mail, dated June 15 that year, quoted the coroner Dr J Devine's verdict on the death.

"I have visited the dock and have seen this large Alsatian," Dr Devine said. "I do not know whether the dead man had seen it and in trying to evade it had fallen into the dock. It would not be very nice to meet an animal like that at night."

From there, the story took on a life of its own as it was reported around the world.



"Papers as far away as Australia got hold of the story," said Mike. "In one report, in The Barrier Miner paper, of New South Wales, the writer claimed the strange dog had been active on the dock for two years but all attempts to catch it, kill it, or even find it had gone without a shred of success.

"It described eyewitnesses walking along the Humber Foreshore at night, seeing in moonlight, the outline of the creature, stood waiting in search of prey."



Police set out to track down the Devil Dog, seeking out its lair on waste ground, in long grass and on the railway lines around Hull.

"In other articles, eyewitnesses gave a description and claimed it was no normal dog. Instead it was more like a wolf with a terrible stare," said Mike. "Some eyewitnesses went further, stating that it moved silently, and could 'pass like a ghost' before people saw it.

"It was believed that woodland, near the dock, was home of the creature, and that those willing to risk their lives could find the dog."

The truth was probably much more simple. Sober reports suggested the dog was simply harmless and frightened of men. It had been seen running around the area, keeping chiefly to the railway lines, but dockers had never heard of it approaching anyone.

Under the heading, "What is the true story about Hull's big bad wolf", the Mail quoted Detective Sergeant Hutchison, "an authority on dogs".

"I have never heard of the dog attacking anyone and I cannot understand such stories," he said. "The dog is more frightened of the men than otherwise and he runs away whenever he sees anyone.

"On one occasion, however, I got it near enough to pat it and it is quite a harmless animal."

As for the tragedy of the dead sailor, a fireman who had been lodging in Chapman Street, no one testified to having seen a dog at the time and the official verdict was "death by drowning".

But for Mike, the legend of the Devil Dog remains a fascinating one.

"On the one hand you had sailors bringing animals across on their travels, so it's possible it belonged to a seaman who lost it while in port," he said. "But historically, legends of strange black dogs have long been known across Britain, from Guytrash, Blackfoot, Padfoot, and the Barghest making appearances in folklore and literature across the British Isles."

No Devil Dog but plenty of big cats

While the Devil Dog may strictly be an urban legend, there have been persistent claims of big cats roaming East Yorkshire.

Several years ago, enthusiasts claimed the county has had more reported sightings than anywhere else. The Big Cats In Britain group had records of big cats spotted in areas including North Ferriby, Hessle, Paull, Pocklington and Wawne.

In 2012, a "puma", pictured, was spotted in Nut Wood, opposite Raywell Hall. It was described as about the size of an Alsatian and was seen with a fox in its mouth.

And in 2010, a "panther" frightened the life out of a local councillor who saw it in Holderness.

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MARK OF SATAN? Possession victim pleads for help after THIS handprint 'stamped on door'

express.co.uk

EXCLUSIVE: AN ALLEGED victim of demonic possession claims this clawed hand print was burned into their bedroom door.

By Jon Austin Jon Austin
PUBLISHED: 13:47, Thu, Nov 3, 2016 | UPDATED: 14:08, Thu, Nov 3, 2016

The unnamed victim has pleaded with paranormal investigators to help after claiming a Catholic priest refused to carry out an exorcism.

They told the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) their condition was making them increasingly violent.

MUFON, based in the US, is the world's largest organisation dedicated to UFO research, but it does also receive reports of other alleged paranormal events.

It is not clear from the report if the person is male or female and their age has not been included, but they are from Carpentersville, in Illinois.

They wrote: "I don't know exactly how to describe what's happening to me but I know that I need help.

"There is something that is attached to me and it is not human.

"It (or they?) Has been attached to me since I can remember. As I get older it is getting more and more aggressive.

"I wake up with very large bruises and welts consistently often in geometric shapes or patterns,this is not my concern though."

They said they were concerned for others around them, due to the risk of violence.

The report added: "People are beginning to notice unexplained bruising, scratches, night those errors(sic), rashes, and ultimately becoming violently sick in my presence.



MUFON

I had a very large inhuman handprint burned into my bedroom door at my old house followed by another one, exactly the same burned into the wall next to my headboard.

Unnamed victim

"I've had instances where physical harm was done to those around me, such as being pushed on stairs or having doors slam on them.

"It comes and goes in long periods, but once it has made its presence known and it knows I know it's there, things get bad.

"I have many witnesses to attest to this, and at one point physical proof (all I can provide now is photographs).

"I had a very large inhuman handprint burned into my bedroom door at my old house followed by another one, exactly the same burned into the wall next to my headboard.

"Both the door and the wall had to be sanded down.

"I went as far as to ask for help from the Catholic Church, they wouldn't even pray with me and seemed disturbed by my presence instantly.

"This thing has never made me feel personally threatened until recently.

"I found my picture of my family and I from when I was a baby fallen from my mirror and laying face down on my dresser.

"When I picked it up to put it back assuming it was a draft or the wind, I discovered that my face had been scratched out.

"I asked everyone in my family (grandparents, my mother and uncle) if it was them and they had no idea what I was talking about until I showed them.

"I am terrified to sleep at night, because I go into these fits of convulsions and screaming that are difficult to wake me up from and calculated sleep walking, neither of which I have any memory of afterwards.

"And by calculated sleep walking, I mean unlocking doors, undoing restrains to keep me from leaving my bed, and most concerning is leaving my home.

"I also went to a psychologist to talk about this problem in hopes that they would tell me that I am crazy but to my disappointment I was told in fact that I am completely in my right mind and that what is happening to me is very real. I have had a government based opinion on the matter as well, those details old have to be discussed exclusively in person.

"Please contact me as soon as possible, even if you can't help me."

MUFON is investigating the bizarre allegations.

Tuesday, 8th November 2016

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The thorny devil lizard's drinking habits

- BY Dr Karl Kruszelnicki |
- August 15, 2016

Australian Geographic



ONE OF THE standard Aussie replies to somebody who asks you how hard you're working is "flat out like a lizard drinking". But Australia's thorny devil has taken it to the max – it doesn't even have to lower its mouth into the water.

Now, lizards are fairly weird creatures. The males have two penises. The left penis is connected to the left testicle, while the right penis is connected to the right testicle. They always tend to use the same penis for mating, unless they've already mated in the last 24 hours. Then they'll use their other penis. Scientists think this is to keep their sperm count high, so that the male lizards have the maximum chance of fertilising a female.

When a thorny devil comes across some dew in the desert in the early morning, it straddles the dew and gently lowers its body on to it. The water runs into tiny channels between the scales. These channels are about one-seventh of the diameter of a human hair across. The water is sucked up by capillary action along the network of narrow interconnecting channels that lie between the scales, and ends up in the mouth of the thorny devil.

This is more than a biological curiosity and could prove to have practical applications for us. The scientific field of biomimetics looks at designs in nature to solve problems in science, engineering and medicine. For example, Japanese researchers found that if they modified hypodermic needles by putting tiny serrations on the tip (such as those on the proboscis of the mosquito), the pain of an injection was reduced.

Herpetologist Wade Sherbrooke proved that the water from the skin ends up in the gut, by putting dyed water on the skin and following its progress. Some people might say that these reptile drainpipes are living the Australian male's dream – they have two penises, they lie around in the Sun all day, and, best of all, when they want a drink, they don't even have to stand up.

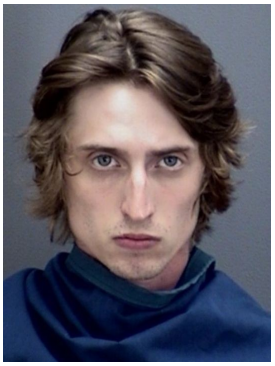
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Suspect tells police he talked to the devil about shooting 2 teens

USA TODAY NETWORK (Wichita Falls, Texas) Times Record News 8:30 p.m. CDT September 6, 2016



(Photo: Courtesy of the Wichita Falls Police Department)

WICHITA FALLS, Texas — A suspect in the shooting of two teen girls in Wichita Falls Friday told police he was angry because he didn't have a girlfriend and had planned the shooting by talking to the devil about it (http://www.timesrecordnews.com/news/crime/BREAKING--392471351.html).

Kody Lott, 20, is charged with murder and aggravated assault and is held in lieu of $4 million bail in the Wichita County Jail.

Details of the shooting came out Tuesday in an arrest affidavit filed at the Wichita County Courthouse.

One girl, Lauren Landavazo, 13, was shot multiple times and was dead at the scene in the 5100 block of Kingston Drive. A friend she was walking with, Makayla Smith, also, 13, was wounded but survived.

According to the affidavit, Makayla was able to talk to police at the emergency room and told them she and Lauren were walking home from McNiel Middle School after class on Friday. The scene of the shooting is only a short distance away from the school.

Makayla said when the two reached Trinidad Drive, a vehicle stopped ahead of them and she saw a young male with shaggy brown hair driving. She said she didn't know the driver, but made eye contact with him and he reached into the passenger area and produced a rifle.

Makayla said he shot her and she ran. She said she looked back and saw Lauren on the ground.

The affidavit says investigators found 15 spent shell casings at the scene. All were .22-calibre, a small rifle bore. Preliminary autopsy reports indicated Lauren Landavazo was shot 14 times.

Police put out descriptions of the vehicle and driver through media. On Sunday, officers got a call from a person at apartments close to the shooting scene. The caller said she had seen a man enter an apartment with what appeared to be a rifle or rifle case. She gave police the vehicle's tag number. Officers spotted and stopped it and arrested Lott.

In an interview at the police station, the suspect admitted he shot the girls. He said he had seen them walking home and was attracted to Lauren, even though he knew she had a boyfriend, which made him angry.

He said he went to his parents' apartment at Fountaingate and got his stepfather's 22-calibre rifle and waited by a window, watching for Lauren to walk by. When he saw her, he drove to an alley and shot Lauren and Makayla. He said he shot Lauren first, then shot Makayla "a couple of times" before going back to continue shooting Lauren.

Afterwards, he said he drove away and threw the rifle into a field. He said he went back to the field Saturday to retrieve the rifle and put it back in his parents' apartment so they wouldn't know it was gone and wouldn't suspect him of the shooting.

According to the affidavit, Lott was upset during the police interview because media had called the shooting "senseless." He said it was not senseless because he had thought it out and planned it because he had talked to the devil about it.

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Boo! Did You Really See A Ghost?

foxnews.com

By Avinash Ramsadeen

Published October 23, 2016
FoxNews.com

Seeing a shadowy figure out of the corner of your eye or hearing footsteps in the attic may set your mind racing with thoughts about the paranormal. But, before you call the “Ghostbusters,” you might want to make an appointment with your doctor. The ghostly haunting you believe you saw may be something physiological and easily explained away.

Two paranormal skeptics, author and researcher Blake Smith and Dr. Karen Stollznow, a linguist and the author of “God Bless America and “Haunting America,” try to provide relief for these symptoms through their podcast, MonsterTalk. They told FoxNews.com that some of the body’s quirks may cause a person to see or hear things that may not actually be there. Smith, a researcher and author, offered sleep paralysis as an example of how the body can play tricks on us.

Sleep paralysis typically occurs during REM (rapid eye movement) sleep where your body is temporarily paralyzed so you don’t act out your dreams. In some cases, you become conscious during REM sleep but you’re still unable to move, creating the terrifying sensation. What can make the situation even worse is some experience hallucinations and a feeling that is a presence in the room with them.

“[Sleep paralysis] is a really common phenomenon where someone wakes up in the middle of the night and finds that they can’t move and it feels like something is holding them down” Smith told FoxNews.com. “It can be really, really frightening and it’s completely compelling that you’ve been haunted, that maybe there’s some ghostly entity attacking you.”

While sleep paralysis can affect anyone, there are some physiological causes of sightings that might be symptoms of a more serious condition. Smith pointed to temporal lobe epilepsy as an example of one of these illnesses that can cause visual hallucination and auditory phantom sounds.

Illnesses that cause a high fever can also result in hallucinations. Additionally, “if a pain management medication is mixed with alcohol or other drugs, hallucinations can result, such as mixing Percocet and NyQuil,” Stollznow told FoxNews.com.

People who are suffering through a recent death are also highly susceptible to hallucinations. According to Stollznow, about 50 percent of people “[believe] that they see, hear, smell, feel the touch of or sense the presence” of a loved one who recently died. This sensation is called grief hallucinations.

Another very serious and potentially deadly reason can be carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a gas leak in an enclosed area. Stollznow said that the poisoning can “cause a person to believe they see ghosts and demons and hear phantom footsteps, and cause them to experience an inexplicable sense of dread.”

> "Typically, with ghosts people see [them] as a solution to a problem"
>
> - Blake Smith

There are mental illnesses that can present similar symptoms, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, but experiencing paranormal sightings may not necessarily indicate a mental disorder.

“Typically, with ghosts people see [them] as a solution to a problem,” Smith said, adding that people who tend to believe in the paranormal might point to ghosts when there is a less frightening reason.

Pareidolia is the blame for many of these cases, which refers to the human instinct to see patterns and faces in objects. Popular examples of this are cases in which people see images of Jesus or the Virgin Mary in everyday objects like pieces of toast.

Pareidolia can explain away the images of ghostly apparitions in photos or a quick glimpse of an entity in the dark corner of a room.

So, if you see something strange this Halloween, consider these reasons before you panic. If not, you might want to call that “Ghostbuster” after all!

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This Dinosaur Cheerleader Is The Real Winner Of Bronco-Chargers Game

huffingtonpost.com

She knocked this routine out of the (Jurassic) park.

10/31/2016 03:48 pm ET
David Moye Reporter, The Huffington Post



A Denver Broncos cheerleader in a dinosaur costume before the game against the San Diego Chargers on Sunday in Denver.

Not only did the Denver Broncos win their game against the San Diego Chargers on Sunday, but a cheerleader for the team won the internet.

Broncos cheerleaders got in the Halloween spirit by dressing in costumes ranging from video game characters to a butterfly. But Romi Bean went one better: She wore a full-on Tyrannosaurus rex costume and still matched her fellow dancers step for step.

Bean works as a sports reporter for CBS Denver TV and radio, according to her Twitter account, and seemed to consider the costumed performance a true bucket list event.

Dancing in a dinosaur costume can be physically challenging, and Bean showed how she prepared with a video she posted on Instagram:

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The Mysterious Disappearance Of Amelia Earhart's Skeleton

forbes.com

Nov 2, 2016 @ 04:27 PM



A new theory put out this week provides one additional link between bones recovered on a Pacific atoll in 1940 and pilot Amelia Earhart. But since the partial skeleton mysteriously disappeared more than 75 years ago, will we ever know if it was indeed the most famous aviatrix in history?

Some time in the spring of 1940, a local living on Nikumaroro, an island in the nation of Kiribati in the south Pacific, found a skull and a bottle. On Sept. 23 of that same year, Gerald “Irish” Gallagher, the officer in charge of the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme (a colonial scheme of the British Empire that sought to populate previously unpopulated islands like Nikumaroro), sends a telegram to his administrative office in Tarawa urging them not to talk about a skull which he noted was quite possibly that of Amelia Earhart.

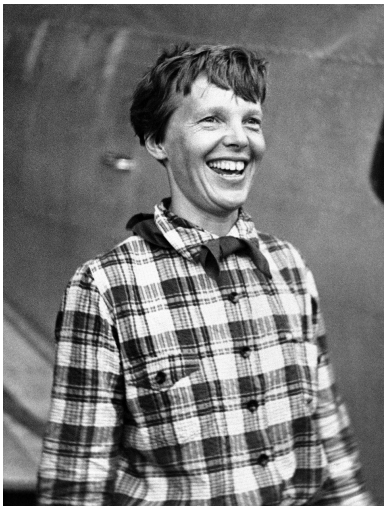
Earhart is, of course, famous as having been the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. She was attempting to circumnavigate the globe in 1937, when she disappeared on July 2, with her last position report coming in from the Nukumanu Islands in Papua New Guinea. Although the original assumption was that Earhart crashed into the ocean, a discovery of mysterious bones along her proposed travel route certainly warranted investigation.

Gallagher further notes in his Sept. 23 correspondence that additional bones had been found, along with a woman’s size 10 shoe and a sextant box. But Gallagher wasn’t convinced the bones were recent, thinking there was only a slight chance they were Earhart’s. Still, he notes in his communication that dental information might be useful since the skull had several teeth present.

A couple weeks later, Henry Harrison Vaskess gets involved, as the secretary of the Western Pacific High Commission in Fiji. He suggests to Sir Harry Luke, the high commissioner, that they involve a Dr. Macpherson. Sir Harry concurs but urges Vaskess to keep the matter secret.

Vaskess telegrams Gallagher asking for more information about the skeleton. Gallagher responds on Oct. 17 that it isn’t a complete skeleton — just a skull, lower jaw (with no dental work), one vertebra, half a pelvis, part of a scapula, a humerus, radius, tibia and fibula and two femora. He further notes that the bones were found under a tree and that coconut crabs have scattered the smaller ones. Gallagher says that he is quite certain the bones are more than four years old but notes that, based on the shoe found nearby, the remains are female.

Vaskess forwards Gallagher’s description of the bones to Dr. Duncan Macpherson, the central medical authority in the Western Pacific High Commission. On Oct. 23, Macpherson tells Vaskess that it is unfortunate only half the pelvis exists and that there is no evidence of dental work, both of which would help establish identity of the skeleton. He notes that age and sex can be established from bone, but that unless some identifying characteristic can be found, the skeleton is of little value in direct identification.



For a couple months, telegrams ping back and forth, and eventually Sir Harry orders the skeleton and associated artifacts to be sent to the High Commission Office in Suva, Fiji. Gallagher packages them up and sends them off on Dec. 27, 1940. The bones arrive on Feb. 3, 1941.

On Feb. 11, Dr. Lindsay Isaac, the acting senior medical officer on Tarawa sends a telegram to Gallagher, informing him that the remains he sent were of an elderly man of Polynesian descent and that the bones were outside for at least 20 years. Gallagher thanks him for the information and calls it anticlimactic.

But then, oddly, the principal of the Central Medical School on Suva, Fiji — Dr. D.W. Hoodless — gets involved to further assess the bones, presumably at the behest of Sir Harry.

On April 4, 1941, Dr. Hoodless sends Sir Harry a telegram with loads of specific information about the bones, including the sides of each. Hoodless also notes the weathered condition of the bones. Using long bone lengths, he puts the person at about 5'5.5″, and based on the half-pelvis and leg bones, he estimates the skeleton as male. Age-at-death he puts between 45-55 years old. Hoodless can't determine ancestry, except to say that the person could be Polynesian, European, or mixed ancestry.

Fast-forward to July of 1941, when the artifacts found with the skeleton were reassessed. The sextant, it seems, was actually just a box in which there might have once been a sextant, and the shoe leather found may have belonged to a man's and a woman's shoe. Gallagher sends Vaskess a telegram on July 3, 1941, suggesting the skeleton was that of a native castaway.

And that's it.

After Hoodless's telegram of April 5, 1941, saying he'd take charge of the bones until someone told him otherwise, there's nothing — no further correspondence, and more importantly, no bones.



Beginning in 1999, The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR) launched an effort to find the missing bones and to recover additional documentation from the early 1940s. TIGHAR's executive director is Ric Gillespie, an aviation accident investigator with an abiding interest in history. His team in 1999 included archaeologist Tom King and forensic anthropologist Karen Ramey Burns, who went searching in Nikumaroro for additional bones, including in the archives, and also conducted interviews with locals who remembered the British officers in the 1940s. They learned some more background information but did not find bones.

Burns was on the team that year because of a presentation she had made at the American Anthropological Association conference in December 1998 along with forensic anthropologist Richard Jantz and the two TIGHAR team members Gillespie and King. Burns and Jantz had found

Hoodless's hand-written notes regarding the measurements and other observations he'd made on the bones. They take issue with Hoodless's telegrams and reports, noting that he never provided key measurements that would support his estimation of sex, stature, or ancestry. In short, he was writing as a medical doctor, not as a forensic anthropologist, and much of what we know now about diversity in 19th and 20th century populations comes from work done in the decades after Hoodless was measuring the Nikumaroro bones.

So the forensic anthropologists independently entered Hoodless's data into FORDISC, the computer program developed by Jantz and his colleague Stephen Ousley. Burns and Jantz agreed that ancestry could be either European or Polynesian, that the person could be either male or female and stature was around 5'6″-5'7″ if female and 5'7.5″-5'8.5″ if male. In reverse-engineering Earhart's height, though, Jantz found that the bone data fit within the expected range for her height. Burns and Jantz concluded, though, based on the bone data that the skeleton was more likely female than male, more likely European than Polynesian, and anywhere between 5'5″ and 5'9″. All agreed that more bones would need to be found to attempt to clinch identification.



In 2003, the TIGHAR team tried again to narrow down who might have kept the bones, and where the bones might be located. While they have ruled out dozens of places as not having these bones, again, the mystery skeleton still had not surfaced. TIGHAR has made several trips over the years in an attempt to find new artifacts or bones, but so far have turned up nothing conclusive.

This week's news picks up with Richard Jantz, who reportedly noticed that the lower arm bone (radius) was longer than average for European women born in the late 19th century as Earhart was. (I assume these data come from the databases that form FORDISC, but I haven't seen a specific citation.) Interestingly, TIGHAR chose to report the humerus-to-radius ratio, which in biological anthropology is also known as the brachial index. This ratio is used in primatology and palaeoanthropology, for example, to hypothesize about locomotion patterns, but is also seems to vary slightly within and between ancestral human groups and can therefore be useful in a forensic context.

Using Hoodless's measurements, the skeleton's brachial index was .756, while the average late 19th century European woman's brachial index was .73. The new analysis, by forensic imaging specialist Jeff Glickman, uses computerized measurements of a photograph of Earhart in which her left arm can be clearly seen hanging at her side. Glickman came up with a brachial index of .76, which matches well with the Nikumaroro bones. There is, then, potentially one more clue to the identity of this mysterious skeleton that disappeared in 1941.

But I have two questions regarding the new analysis. First, Glickman's report notes that "traditional error analysis cannot be done when landmark positions are estimated." That is, the index of .76 should come with a standard error, to create a range. If the errors in this sort of analysis are typically small, they may not change the brachial index. But if the errors tend to be large, that index could change dramatically.

And second, as we learned in Hoodless's April 4, 1941 telegram, the bones include a left humerus and a right radius. It is well known that humans' handedness can mean differences in length in the

bones of the dominant and non-dominant sides. If Earhart was right-handed, it is not unreasonable to expect her right humerus may have been longer than her left. And that means that we have to question the brachial index — a longer right humerus matching with a longer right radius would mean a smaller, and more average, ratio.

Another issue, though, is the dismissal of the 1940s British reports of the age, sex, stature, and ancestry of the skeleton. In a 2015 *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* paper, Pamela Cross and Richard Wright disagree with Burns and Jantz on the reanalysis of the remains. In reading the notes by Drs. Hoodless, Isaac, and Macpherson, Cross and Wright agree that these men were not simple doctors, but rather highly skilled in human anatomy generally and in the specific human physiology of the area. Those notes from 75 years ago still make sense in a forensic context, Cross and Wright argue, and suggest the bones were those of a short, stocky, middle-aged male.

They also ran the skull measurements through a competing ancestry assessment program, CRANID, and got a very different result than what Burns and Jantz found. Without measurements that could indicate sex, without bone remains left to estimate age, without any evidence to counter the British assessments in the 1940s, Cross and Wright conclude that “the most robust analysis of the Nikumaroro bones indicates that the individual was most likely a stocky male, not Amelia Earhart.”

So, what we have here are competing claims based on a few measurements that the skeleton either is or is not Amelia Earhart. The huge problem — the complete disappearance of the bones — remains a major issue, though, and one that hasn’t been solved in over 15 years of research by TIGHAR.

In the end, we are unlikely ever to be sure that the bones found in 1940 are those of Earhart.



Kristina Killgrove is a bioarchaeologist at the University of West Florida. For more osteology news, follow her on Twitter (@DrKillgrove) or like her Facebook page Powered by Osteons.

Nov 2, 2016 @ 08:02 AM

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Dismembered bodies of family including baby found wrapped in plastic bags

22:36, 19 Sep 2016 Updated 22:36, 19 Sep 2016 By Gerard Couzens

mirror.co.uk



Google

The grisly dismembered remains of a murdered family , including two young children, have been unearthed by police.

The dismembered bodies were discovered in plastic bags in Spain after a neighbour complained of a "bad smell".

The two tragic children are just one and four-years-old.

The gruesome discovery was made by police when they forced their way in through a window late last night.

The family had been living at the rented property on a private estate in Pioz – an hour's drive east of the Spanish capital – for just over a month after leaving another place in the centre of the village.



The popular parque del Buen Retiro

The village is an hour's drive from Spanish capital Madrid

Pioz has a population of just 4,000 inhabitants and was named as Spain's most indebted place in 2012 after it emerged it owed millions of pounds in outstanding bills to suppliers.

Village mayor Ricardo Garcia visited the scene and was expected to declare three days of mourning.

Local reports said the adults and children had not been seen since the end of August.

The suspected murders are thought to have occurred on August 22.

The bags the bodies were found in had been left in the living room and wrapped up with Duct tape.

The remains were removed after an investigating judge tasked with coordinating the probe visited the scene.

Neighbours said the family, originally from Brazil, seemed very reserved and it was rare to see them out and about, although the dad had been spotted walking to the supermarket because he didn't own a car.

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Image courtesy Cachét Whitman: http://pirate-cashoo.deviantart.com

The Slenderman

Tracing the birth and evolution of a modern monster

by ***Ian 'Cat' Vincent***

We don't often get to see the birth of a monster. Just over two years ago, a new monster was born. Because it was born on the internet, we can see the exact moment of its conception. We can follow its growth from a pair of photographs into a full-fledged mythology. We can see the point where it crossed over from a merely imaginal creature into something that haunts the minds of many. And we can see exactly when it became a creature of true occult significance. Its path is clear and distinct. Its legacy is undeniable.

The monster's name is Slenderman. And its influence continues to grow.

Something Awful

Slenderman's birth-date is June 10th, 2009. Its father is a Photoshop artist who goes by the name Victor Surge. Its birth-place was a forum thread of the popular site somethingawful.com, noted for its many Photoshop competitions. The remit for this particular competition was, simply: "Create Paranormal Images". The resulting forum thread ran for two days before Surge posted his pair of pictures – at which point, the thread pretty much became solely about Surge's creation.

Both of Victor Surge's original Slenderman pictures are simple, evocative black and white images of children. In the first, a group of kids are walking away from, or possibly fleeing…something. In the second (see opposite page), other children are playing in a park, where a similar figure lurks nearly invisibly behind the slide and trees.

The monster in their midst appears to be an unusually tall, possibly bald, pale man in a black suit and tie, whose face cannot be discerned. In the second picture, there is a hint that the figure's bizarrely long arms are transforming into tentacles. In both images, the figure is barely visible, almost blurring into the background.

Under each image is a quote from the alleged original archivist. The first reads:

> "…we didn't want to go, we didn't want to kill them, but it's persistent silence and outstretched arms horrified and comforted us at the same time..."
>
> – 1983, photographer unknown, presumed dead.

The second quote gives the monster its name:

> "One of two recovered photographs from the Stirling City Library blaze. Notable for being taken the day which fourteen children vanished and for what is referred to as "The Slender



The Slenderman makes his appearance (Photoshopped image posted by Victor Surge to SA)

> Man". Deformities cited as film defects by officials. Fire at library occurred one week later. Actual photograph confiscated as evidence."
>
> – 1986, photographer: Mary Thomas, missing since June 13th, 1986.

The very next user comment, from 'slidebite', is prescient: "You just know a couple of the good ones are going to eventually make it to paranormal websites and be used as genuine." Even at this early juncture, there appears a tendency to blur the line between fact and fantasy. Surge's next comment, in response to a post hoping for more Slenderman pictures, reads: "Maybe I'll do some more research. I've heard there may be a couple more legit 'Slender Man' photographs out there. I'll post them if I find them."

Over the next five days, Surge posted several more pictures of the creature, whose name shifted from "Slender Man" to "Slenderman". Several other users were thoroughly hooked by the idea, contributing a variety of additions to the burgeoning mythology – from other 'Photoshopped' pictures to short prose pieces. Some contributors expanded on the background history – a tendency which soon became a popular past-time among aficionados. The earliest of these, from user 'Thoreau-Up' (15 June 2009, 0103hrs), tied Slenderman into German medieval folk tales:

> I've been following the signs for quite some time. There are woodcuts dated back to the 16th century in Germany featuring a tall, disfigured man with only white spheres where his eyes should be. They called him "Der Großmann"[Sic], the tall man. He was a fairy who lived in the Black Forest. Bad children who crept into the woods at night would be chased by the slender man, and he wouldn't leave them alone until he caught them, or the child told the parents what he or she had done.

'Thoreau-Up' then goes on to provide the following "chilling account from an old journal, dating around 1702 (translated from German, some words may be inaccurate)":

> My child, my Lars… He is gone. Taken, from his bed. The only thing that we found was a scrap of black clothing. It feels like cotton, but it is softer…thicker. Lars came into my bedroom yesterday, screaming at the top of his lungs that "The angel is outside!", I asked him what he was talking about, and he told me some nonsense fairy story about *Der Großmann*. He said he went into the groves by our village and found one of my cows dead, hanging from a tree. I thought nothing of it at first… But now, he is gone. We must find Lars, and my family must leave before we are killed. I am sorry my son… I should have listened. May God forgive me.

He finishes by remarking that there is "more evidence of the slender man, but this is one of the oldest translatable accounts. Anyone else in the thread found anything like this?"

A couple of hours after this post came the earliest hint that Slenderman's nature was moving beyond merely a collaborative fiction into an altogether more sinister realm. From a user simply named 'I' came this chilling post:

> The Slender Man. He exists because you thought of him. Now try and not think of him.

By the end of June 15, there was a notable growth spurt – several stories of Slenderman, set in time periods from 5000BCE to the Middle Ages to the 1950s to the present, appeared within a few hours. And, ominously, several members of the forum posted that they were having nightmares about Slenderman…

The next day, user 'LeechCode5' made a post which would perhaps go on to inspire the next stage of Slenderman's development:

> I'm suddenly imagining a Slender Man "documentary," done in a style similar to *The Last Broadcast* or that old Alien Abduction tv special. Interviews with witnesses of various encounters through the years, investigation into the different events brought up in this thread, and specialists analyzing photographs, intercut around home video footage taken by a missing family, showing them being picked off by the Slender Man. As we get further into the film, we also start to see behind the scenes footage of the making of the documentary, with crew members not showing for work and not answering calls, various production problems…then finally ending with a note that the director disappeared immediately after completion of the film.

The first of many such videos – *Marble Hornets* – appeared within days and became an enormous success on YouTube, inspiring a huge expansion of Slenderman's fan-base. But more of that later…

Although there were still some postings of new Photoshop art around the original "Create Paranormal Photo" theme, the majority of the somethingawful.com (SA) thread now revolved around Slenderman. Many of the fiction contributions took the form of transcripts from interviews with victims of Slenderman, often set in either police or psychiatric interrogation contexts. Some of these were rapidly adapted into short sound pieces, as a kind of minimalist modern radio play.

The outpouring of creativity around those initial pair of images was remarkable, even for a high-traffic site noted for its intensely creative and enthusiastic members. Debate ranged widely about the nature of Slenderman – trying to establish whether or not there was a single entity or several Slendermen, and what precisely its background and nature were. An apt comment from 'JossiRossi', (16 June 2009, 1927hrs) : "I think it should be said that the closer you think you are to understanding the Slender Man, the more incorrect you really are."

The metafictional aspect of Slenderman dominated from the start. One contribution from 'BooDoug187' (same day, 2228hrs) told the tale of Go Waita, a Japanese manga writer whose work had been directly influenced by Slenderman's entry into his personal life:

> Koga: Well, I guess my first question is about your most famed creation, Suited Demon...
> Waita: I didn't create him.
> Koga: Oh... well who did? A friend?
> Waita: He's real.
> Koga: Real? A creature like that is real? Rapeing (sic) school girls…
> Waita: The sex and surprise sex in my stories aren't my idea. That's something the editors and others wanted…the demon is real.
> Koga: How do you know this?
> Waita: I've seen it…it killed my sister.
> Koga: You seen it kill?
>
> Waita just looks at me. He then stands up, walks to his bookcase and pulls out a large, old sketch book. He opens it and shows me drawings of the Suited Demon carrying a young child into the woods. As I flip through the pages the story that plays out is like one that plays out in many of Waita's books, except no graphic sex.
>
> Waita: The girl in those pictures is my sister. She was seven years old when the demon took her.
> Koga: How did you see this happen?
> Waita: I followed her and the demon into the woods. I was eleven at the time. I thought that the demon was a man…a child molester trying to harm my sister. I followed them into the woods…that's when I watch it happen.
> Koga: You didn't try to help?
> Waita: I couldn't I was stunned in terror when I saw it's true form… when I saw it tear into her… It didn't see me…or if it did it didn't

> care. I must have sat there for several hours because my father was the one who found me the next morning. I tried to tell the police what I saw but they said that I must have been in shock. That I must have been forced to watch some killer murder my sister.
> Koga: I see… I'm sorry to bring it up…but if this haunts you… why base so many of your stories on it? Almost all your books are on this demon.
> Waita: You don't get it…it's all I can draw…

This level of intense, terrified obsession as expressed by the fictional Go Waita underlies the entire thread. For several more days, the stories grew – as did the reports of nightmares. This example, from user 'LemoOHnade' (17 June 2009, 0720hrs), is pretty typical: "The Slender Man came to me in a dream and told me that he existed between 'everything' and 'nothing' and that time and matter are like toys(???), then he broke into tiny 'jellyfish' like things that swam away into my radiator."

One story offshoot of the original mythology involved a Black Ops branch of US intelligence known as 'Optic Nerve', who have had knowledge of Slenderman for decades, possibly centuries. Within this part of the story comes the first time one of Slenderman's key characteristics is expressed – that it is unkillable…

> I have read the notes, looked through the files. There is no way on God's green Earth we will be able to do anything to stop this thing. In all my years with working cases for Optic Nerve I have seen things and proven many times before that supposed "Gods" can be killed.
>
> But this…Slender Man… There is nothing in any records of anything thing even remotely hurting it. Reports ranging from small arms fire, artillery fire (the report from that Nazi Artillery team… that's what made me think about this) even full scale forest fires doesn't do anything!

> This is a complete and total waste of time and man power. There is nothing you can say to me, or anyone in this branch that will make us change our minds. In a sick sad way the only thing we can do is keep a record of this thing.
>
> We can't kill it No way in hell we can capture it.
> (user 'BooDoug187', 17 June 2009, 0819hrs)

A day later, the previously briefly-suggested idea of Slenderman becoming the basis of an Alternate Reality Game (or ARG, of which more below) is proposed in detail. By now, the SA thread had received wider publicity, notably from that infamous source of many an internet meme, 4-Chan. A Wikipedia page had appeared. It was suggested in the SA forum that a series of fake websites be set up to subtly introduce the Slenderman mythos into the internet datastream, leaving its fictional origins aside and seeing who would end up believing it – for, as they say on 4-Chan, "the lulz". It was pretty much too late for this to be completely successful – anyone could track their way back to the original thread and find its origins. Instead, the narrative takes on a blurry, liminal quality – truth and fancy overlapping almost indistinguishably.

Not long after this point, the Slenderman story acquired two major developments. The first was the initial appearance of *Marble Hornet*s. The second development, one which moved the Slenderman mythos even further from the realm of pure fiction into that of the truly paranormal, was the first use of a particular word to describe Slenderman: tulpa.

Marble Hornets, Alternate Reality

The first mention of *Marble Hornets* comes on June 18th, 2009. User 'ce gars' posted to the SA thread regarding a student film

he had collaborated on with a film school friend named Alex two years previously:

> It was called Marble Hornets and I think it was about a twenty something returning to his childhood home and recalling events that happened there. It was pretty pretentious film student fare, but I helped out for a few days before my summer classes started, and a few rare occasions after that. Everyone on the set seemed pretty excited to be making it, especially Alex. The set itself was about half a mile away from Alex's house, roughly a thirty minute drive away from where I lived at the time. It was a pretty heavily wooded area, I guess to give it a sparsely populated small town feel. Most of the movie took place outside.
>
> After about two months of off and on shooting, Alex dropped his pet project completely. It was really sudden when he let me know about it. When I asked him why, he told me it was because of the "unworkable conditions" of where he had picked to shoot. Which struck me as very odd since he had been living around that area since he was eight, and never seemed to have a problem with it. What's even stranger is that he acted incredibly distant when telling me this news. Soon after, he started avoiding me and from what I hear, everyone else. All he did was sit around his house.

User 'ce gars' (aka Jay) contacted Alex to see how he was:

> Something about him was worse than I'd originally thought. He had lost a good bit of weight, and looked pretty sickly. I pretended like I didn't notice and we just hung out for awhile. Right before I left, I asked him about Marble Hornets and what he was planning on doing with all of his tapes of raw footage. With almost no hesitation, he simply said "burn them".

> This caught me off guard. When I asked why he didn't just archive them for B-roll in future projects, he just said he never wanted to work with the footage again. He was completely serious about this. I couldn't understand why he'd just want to get rid of it completely. Surely it wasn't all that useless. So I asked if I could take a look at them.
>
> He agreed, but only under the circumstance that I never bring them back to him, and never discuss what was on them with him. He also highly discouraged me from showing any if it to anyone else. I laughed at this, and said that he must have accidentally made *The Ring* or something with the way he was talking. He didn't acknowledge this and brought me up to his attic, where he was storing the pile of tapes.
>
> There were tons of them…

Alex gave Jay the bag of tapes and unceremoniously threw him out of the house, saying, "I'm not kidding, don't ever bring this up around me again." Jay filed the tapes, and was only drawn to take another look at them when the Slenderman thread at SA nudged his memory.

> I've decided to begin going through the tapes later tonight. If I don't do it now, I probably never will. I'm hoping all I find is an unfinished student film and nothing else. That would sure put me at ease now that I'm thinking about it again. If there's interest, I'll post anything that I find on here.

The first clip was posted to YouTube on June 20th, 2009, and linked to on the SA thread. Further postings followed, continuing to this day.

Marble Hornets is, if nothing else, an exemplary example of the found-footage horror genre. The breakthrough film of this type – *The Blair Witch Project* – sums up the basic idea nicely; footage from

a lost or vanished film crew is reconstructed and edited so as to tell the story of their disappearance. The lifelike *Cinéma vérité* elements, combined with the ability to make such films very cheaply indeed, have contributed to their popularity – even resulting in relatively high-budgeted Hollywood assays into the field, such as *Paranormal Activity*, *The Last Exorcist* and *Apollo 18*.

Even for such a fruitful genre, *Marble Hornets* is an exceptional piece of work. Made for an initial budget of around $300 by student film-makers Troy Wagner and Joseph DeLage, each episode slowly builds dramatic tension to a series of genuinely shocking moments. Certain scenes, frankly, scared the shit out of me – and I'm a lifelong horror fan who's done more than my fair share of intensely spooky field paranormal work.

Marble Hornets (hereafter referred to as *MH*) brings a series of disturbing new aspects to the mythos, which have been carried over into later works. Principle among these are:

- Slenderman is shown to have a powerful physical effect on those who he has chosen (or, perhaps, who have chosen to pursue him) – victims are prone to violent coughing fits, often accompanied with blood. They black out, losing periods of time from a few hours to three months. During these periods of lost time, they often perform activities very different from their conscious behaviour – including murder.
- Some victims take on sinister new personalities during these episodes; donning masks, scrawling bizarre messages. A key image in these scribblings is the so-called Operator Symbol – a circle with a cross through it, written in text as (x). This clearly relates to Slenderman in some way (the film-makers have referred to their version of Slenderman as 'The Operator' several times) but whether the Operator Symbol is used to represent, summon or protect one from Slenderman is unknown.



- The presence of Slenderman is shown to have an effect on audio-visual recording equipment – strange noises creep into the soundtrack when Slenderman (or those he is influencing) move into shot. The image itself distorts, flares, sometimes breaks down into static or apparently-random geometric figures.
- Slenderman seems to have an affinity with, and possibly control of, doorways and other passageways. He is seen to creep from the doorways of rooms previously shown to be empty, or to lure people through doors into places which by all rights should not be accessible through that door. In many ways, Slenderman is an avatar of liminality itself.

The *MH* story builds on this continually. 'Jay' (played by Wagner), the original uploader of the YouTube clips, soon finds himself haunted by Slenderman in the precise way that 'Alex' (the director of the original footage, played by DeLage) is shown to be within those clips. And then (some nine episodes into *MH's* initial run) somebody else, using the name 'totheark', began posting clips in response/commentary to Jay's posts – some of which show footage of Jay himself. Sometimes, postings by 'totheark' came from Jay's own YouTube account…

The 'totheark' postings are, of course, also part of the story Wagner and DeLage are telling. The clips attributed to 'totheark' not only counterpoint the initial Jay posts, but contain hidden clues to the nature of Slenderman concealed within them, using various forms of visual and auditory steganography (encoding messages within the content of another message). This aspect of the storytelling puts *Marble Hornets* firmly within another powerful internet-born motif, the Alternate Reality Game, or ARG. ARGs have been around since 1996, although there are many precursors and influences to the concept in fiction, such as the deeply odd British 1990s TV show *The One Game* and the David Fincher film *The Game*. A FAQ on the subject defines them as an experience "that encourages players (you!) to interact with a fictional world using the real world to do it."

Players of an ARG are asked to look for clues to further the game's storyline in a variety of media – websites, film clips, even co-opted advertising – and often take part in exchanges of email and other communication with those running the game. The ARG acts as a kind of filter through which the 'real' world can be seen, usually exposing a complex conspiracy within the context of the game. The more you participate, the more you learn. Players usually communicate on a variety of message boards set up either by the game creators or the players themselves (a very good, slightly fictionalized take on how ARGs work can be found in Walter Jon Williams' novel *This Is Not A Game*).

Often ARGs are a secondary form of advertising for a media product – one of the first ARGs was used to publicise the Spielberg film *AI*, and one of the most popular, "I Love Bees", was part of the ad campaign for the game *Halo 2*. Sometimes though, an ARG happens simply because a large and enthusiastic enough group of internet users decide to create one.

The first mention of ARGs in relation to Slenderman can be found in the Something Awful thread on 15th June 2009, 0223 – user 'MooseyFate' posted:



Example of image modification to incorporate Slenderman mythos – modified version by SA poster 'GyverMac' on the left, original on right.

> I LOVE this type of thing. Something just feels satisfying about causing mass hysteria. I think we could roll with this slender man thing. Maybe if we make enough images and maybe if some talents can make fake videos, it could grow to ARG proportions (minus the advertising).

Most, if not all, of the subsequent Slenderman material could be seen as facets of a single, massive ARG. The premiere website for followers and participants of ARGs is unfiction.com – and unsurprisingly, there is a great amount of material about Slenderman, and *MH* in particular, there. And by a great amount, I mean: the original *MH* thread alone was locked after 323 pages…and there are dozens of other *MH*-related threads.

Although *MH* was the first, it was far from the only video-based work to feature Slenderman. There are now dozens of such series, most of them posted in instalments to YouTube in the same manner as *MH*. They vary in quality – and degree of viewer involvement expected – greatly. One of the strongest contenders for the most popular Slenderman video series, EverymanHYBRID, takes the commonly-used elements of steganography much further: viewers are encouraged to join in with the storyline in various email-and-Twitter-based competitions, including trying to find the locations of a series of geo-cached boxes containing further clues to the story's deeper background.

All of these different but parallel stories feed into each other, with ideas from one moving to others almost as if by osmosis. This recently culminated in a series of crossover videos where characters from *Marble Hornets*, *EverymanHYBRID* and another popular series, *DarkHarvest00*, appeared in the same YouTube releases.

All of the various series, however, occupy the same mythological space, whether or not each story is considered canon within another series. For example, EverymanHYBRID actually refers to Slenderman as an internet meme within the episodes – the videos begin as a supposed DIY keep-fit show, where the creators

had inserted a Slenderman background appearance as a joke… only for this to backfire drastically when their actions attract the unwanted attention of the 'real' Slenderman. As I mentioned earlier, metatextural elements are an integral part of the Slenderman mythos.

That mythos, as it has grown, has taken on more and more aspects which bring its fictional status across into a form of occult potentiality. Much of this revolves around a particular concept of the previously-fictional manifesting across into quotidian reality. This concept is best put in a single word of Tibetan - *Tulpa*.

'Thought-form'

The concept of Tulpas, the word itself, derives from ancient Tibetan magical and mystical praxis. The usual translation of the word is 'thought-form'.

The Tibetan mystical system is a complex patchwork – a syncretic mix of aspects of Buddhism, Taoism and the native pre-Buddhist Bön shamanic tradition. This mix is uneven at best – some areas of the Himalayan region spurned the majority of the Bön practices, while others barely paid lip service to the formal Buddhist arrangements which overlay their culture – not unlike a Voudon practitioner making a point of showing up to their local Catholic church every Sunday while maintaining a shrine to the Loas in their Christian disguises. As a result, some practices were more commonly available in particular areas. Most Buddhists would reject the tulpa idea as base superstition…but the idea remained entrenched in the native folklore.

The earliest report of the tulpa concept in the West came from a book written in the 1940s by the explorer and early Buddhist convert, Alexandra David-Neel. David-Neel was a remarkable woman. A determined explorer of both land and culture, she travelled extensively in the Far East (often with her son in tow!), eventually

living in the Nepal-Tibet area, training formally in the Tibetan form of Buddhism and attaining the rank of Lama – one of the few women, certainly the only Western woman, ever to do so. In her book *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, she describes her own experience with the tulpa concept – and her successful attempt to construct one:

> However interested we may feel in the other strange accomplishments with which Tibetan adepts of the secret lore are credited, the creation of thought forms seems by far the most puzzling.
>
> As I have said, some apparitions are created on purpose either by a lengthy process …or, in the case of proficient adepts, instantaneously or almost instantaneously. In other cases, apparently the author of the phenomenon generates it unconsciously, and is not even in the least aware of the apparition being seen by others.
>
> However, the practice is considered as fraught with danger for every one who has not reached a high mental and spiritual degree of enlightenment and is not fully aware of the nature of the psychic forces at work in the process.
>
> Once the tulpa is endowed with enough vitality to be capable of playing the part of a real being, it tends to free itself from its maker's control. This, say Tibetan occultists, happens nearly mechanically, just as the child, when his body is completed and able to live apart, leaves its mother's womb. Sometimes the phantom becomes a rebellious son and one hears of uncanny struggles that have taken place between magicians and their creatures, the former being severely hurt or even killed by the latter.
>
> Tibetan magicians also relate cases in which the tulpa is sent to fulfil a mission, but does not come back and pursues its peregrinations as a half-conscious, dangerously mischievous puppet. The same thing, it

> is said, may happen when the maker of the tulpa dies before having dissolved it. Yet as a rule the phantom either disappears suddenly at the death of the magician or gradually vanishes like a body that perishes for want of food. On the other hand, some tulpas are expressly intended to survive their creator and are specially formed for that purpose.

Fascinated by this concept, David-Neel decided to experiment with creating a tulpa herself. To avoid the Lamaist influence (as, I suspect, a form of control on the experiment) she decided to base her tulpa on quite another set of imagery – a plump, jolly Christian monk, not unlike Friar Tuck of the Robin Hood legends:

> I shut myself in tsams (meditative seclusion) and proceeded to perform the prescribed concentration of thought and other rites. After a few months the phantom Monk was formed. His form grew gradually fixed and lifelike looking. He became a kind of guest, living in my apartment. I then broke my seclusion and started for a tour, with my servants and tents.
>
> The Monk included himself in the party. Though I lived in the open, riding on horseback for miles each day, the illusion persisted. I saw the fat tulpa; now and then it was not necessary for me to think of him to make him appear. The phantom performed various actions of the kind that are natural to travellers and that I had not commanded. For instance, he walked, stopped, looked around him. The illusion was mostly visual, but sometimes I felt as if a robe was lightly rubbing against me, and once a hand seemed to touch my shoulder.
>
> The features which I had imagined, when building my phantom, gradually underwent a change. The fat, chubby-cheeked fellow grew leaner, his face assumed a vaguely mocking, sly, malignant look. He became more troublesome and bold. In brief, he escaped my control. Once, a herdsman who brought me a present of butter saw the tulpa in my tent and took it for a living lama.

> I ought to have let the phenomenon follow its course, but the presence of that unwanted companion began to prove trying to my nerves; it turned into a "day-nightmare". Moreover, I was beginning to plan my journey to Lhasa and needed a quiet brain devoid of other preoccupations, so I decided to dissolve the phantom. I succeeded, but only after six months of hard struggle. *My mind-creature was tenacious of life.* (Emphasis mine.)
>
> There is nothing strange in the fact that I may have created my own hallucination. The interesting point is that in these cases of materialization, others see the thought-forms that have been created.

The tulpa has been absorbed into modern magical theory via the Chaos Magic school – the inveterate pack-rat nature of Chaos practitioners means that few if any of the world's occult and mystical concepts have gone untapped…and the possibility of making imagination manifest in such a direct form meshes nicely with their concepts of Servitor and Egregore, and with the memetic transmission of occult ideas and powers. So, the possibility of constructing a tulpa is relatively well-known in modern magical praxis – which may or may not have influenced its appearance as an integral part of the Slenderman mythos.

The first hint within Slenderman canon that 'Slendy' was perhaps a form of tulpa appeared early on in the original somethingawful.com thread. As noted above, it was in the post from 'I' saying "He exists because you thought of him. Now try and not think of him."

The first direct reference to Tulpas, however, came on 20th July 2009 – the day after the first *Marble Hornets* video and only ten days from Victor Surge's initial post. Here is how user 'Soakie' put it:

> Has anyone thought about the possibility that we are creating a tulpa? It's a thought form that is realized through the efforts of a group of people. We might be creating the Slender Man, making him real. The Toronto Society for Psychical Research did this with an entity called

"Philip" in the mid-1970s. There was a book written about it, called *Conjuring Up Philip*. "He" was a fictional person, knowingly created by the group. It was all fun and games until "Philip" started to take on a mind of his own. "Philip" became real, as far as any paranormal thing could be said to be real. So take all this with a big grain of salt.

How long until there is agreement about what the Slender Man looks like? When will he have a specific MO? Can the hidden superstitious heart of the SA Goons give Slenderman an independent existence? Think about it, a few hundred or maybe even a thousand Goons, all looking at the pictures and creating the stories. I find myself looking at the shadows, imagining how they might fall together to show a lurking Slenderman. 'Slendy' pulls so many primal strings: his wrongness to our eyes, the hair on the back of the neck rising, the subconscious "Nonononono" that bursts across the imagination. He drags the monsters out of the back of our modern minds. He is a satisfactory boogie-man, pressing all the right buttons. Even if we don't really believe in the supernatural, even if our rational minds laugh at such an absurdity…we are cutting him out and sewing him together. We're stuffing him with nightmares and unspoken fears.And what happens when the pictures are no longer Photoshop creations…?

From this point on, Slenderman-as-tulpa became effectively canon. This raises an interesting, perhaps worrying, possibility: Even if Slenderman started out purely as an invented creature, has it stayed that way? Has naming it as a tulpa, in effect, given it the power to be created as one?

The problem with answering this decisively is an essential part of the nature of the beast. Although those involved in ARGs are (indeed, have to be) scrupulous in their discussions of what is and is not OOG (Out-Of-Game – i.e. actual comments regarding the creation and playing of the game rather than the story elements themselves), there is some inevitable bleed-through between the two. So, when (for example) the popular Fortean radio talk show 'Coast To Coast' gets several callers describing their Slenderman encounters, can we – should we – take those stories to be true? Does it matter?

The Slenderman meme is spreading rapidly across the internet. At this point there are dozens of video series, dozens more first-person blogs telling serialized stories within the mythos. Hundreds, maybe thousands of enthusiastic creators, yet more following the phenomenon avidly. News articles about the phenomenon are starting to appear. Other media are beginning to pay attention to the Slenderman story. (The popular game Minecraft, for instance, added a character called Enderman – explicitly based on Slenderman – in a recent game update.) Popular bloggers and Twitter users often refer to Slenderman in their posts. Slenderman is going, as they say, viral. And as the virus spreads, so do the symptoms…

On the internet, nobody knows if you're a dog. Or a tulpa. And if enough people describe something as a thought-form…could this collective imagining actually make that form manifest?

And, if that form does manifest – this powerful, terrifying, unkillable thing called Slenderman – how can we fight it?

Ian 'Cat' Vincent was born on Imbolc-Groundhog Day in Gravesend, England, 1964. He is a lifelong student of the occult, and a former professional combat magician, curse-breaker and exorcist. In recent years, he has focused on exploring the utility of the 'hyper-real' (fiction-inspired) belief systems. His writing on Forteana and magic, especially on the personal magical style he terms 'Guttershaman', can be found at http://catvincent.com. He is also a staff writer at http://weaponizer.co.uk and http://modernmythology.net and co-curates the consciousness news/discussion group http://fuckyeahconsciousness.tumblr.com. He lives in England with his partner, the artist/writer Kirsty Hall. He is often found on Twitter as @catvincent.

He knows how to kill a Slenderman. Honest.

Does this medieval painting show HUGE UFO visited Dracula's homeland 100s of years ago?

express.co.uk

EXPRESS Home of the Daily and Sunday Express

Does this medieval painting show HUGE UFO visited Dracula's homeland 100s of years ago?

UFOS and aliens have been visiting the homeland of Count Dracula for hundreds of years, according to astonishing new claims from an academic.

By Jon Austin
PUBLISHED: 15:47, Fri, Oct 21, 2016 | UPDATED: 16:09, Fri, Oct 21, 2016



FLYINGDISK

A medieval fresco in the Monastery Church in Sighisoara, Transylvania, could show a visitation by a huge UFO hundreds of years ago, according to Dan D Farcas Phd in his new book, UFOs over Romania.

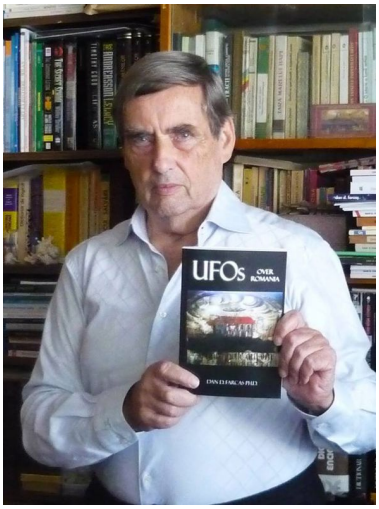
The picture includes a large alien flying saucer-shaped object high above a church-like building, and there appears to be a beam of light coming out of it.

The work is believed to date from before 1534, but investigators have been unable to pinpoint exactly when it was done or who by.

Mr Farcas, 76, who has a PhD in maths and computers, is President of the Association for the Study of Unidentified Aerospace Phenomena (ASFAN) in Romania and also a member of the Academy of Medical Sciences of Romania.

He said: “Are these painting depictions of medieval UFO sightings or do they have a much more mundane and simpler explanation?

“As an academic and a UFO researcher I must admit that the images in these paintings are certainly worth a second look and we should not rule out the possibility that they do depict something that today would be described as a UFO.”



FLYIMNGDISK

This is not the first time alleged UFOs have been seen in centuries old paintings, and some researchers believe aliens may have visited Earth throughout history.

The book also looks at the case of a sighting near Dracula's castle.

Mr Farcas recounts how a couple saw a massive disc fly out of a lake during a visit to the ruins of Poenari, also known as Dracula’s Castle.

The structure was rebuilt by bloodthirsty tyrant Vlad the Impaler, said to be the inspiration for Bram Stoker’s Count Dracula, in 1459.

The pair said the UFO then flew north towards Transylvania over mountains.

Another case of note in the book involved police sergeant Marian Mancu and Maricel Rusu, a voluntary guard.

When on night patrol on July 8, 1996, in the village of Certesti, Romania, at around 12.30am, they saw bizarre flashing lights.

Mr Mancu said an object with flashing red and blue lights was hovering half a metre above ground, before landing behind him when three bizarre aliens got out.

He said they had white faces, big heads with pointed ears and were covered in grey scales.

He said: “When I saw what they looked like, their very ugly faces, I told myself they are not human.

"I became afraid and I was hiding myself in the ditch just in case something might happen because I have never seen any such beings in my life before.”

Mr Farcas said: “It is unlikely the witnesses could invent all the very peculiar details and to go public with them in such a highly natural and convincing manner.

"It is also unlikely that it could be delusion staged by someone else.

Unfortunately we did not have the means to conduct any psychological tests, or lie detectors, but we did not discover anybody with any kind of motivation to invent such a story.

“It would have been interesting to use regressive hypnosis, or something similar, in this case.

"Unfortunately, in Romania, we face a lack of professionals practicing hypnotic regression and willing to apply it in such situations.

"Also, even the expenses to arrange such sessions are a real problem.”

UFOs over Romania is published by Flying Disk Press and available on Amazon.

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Dog Elected Mayor, Again!

huffingtonpost.com

It was a landslide victory.

08/23/2016 04:22 am ET
Ed MazzaOvernight Editor



Duke, the mayor of Cormorant, Minnesota, just won reelection to a third consecutive term.

Duke may be the most popular politician in America, winning re-election for a landmark third time in a landslide.

What's his secret? Probably the fact that he's a dog, and everyone loves dogs.

In a vote held over the weekend, the 9-year-old Great Pyrenees won his third consecutive term as mayor of Cormorant, Minnesota. Voters paid $1 each to cast ballots in the election, which was held during the annual "Cormorant Daze" festival.

"Everybody voted for Duke, except for one vote for his girlfriend, Lassie," David Rick, Duke's owner, told local ABC station WDAY.

As mayor, Duke appears on three highway billboards promoting the community.



Duke, the mayor of Cormorant, Minnesota, just won reelection to a third consecutive term. Sophie Gamand

While Duke's role is somewhat unusual, he's not the first animal to be elected to office in the U.S. Roadtrippers has a fascinating look at some of the nation's non-human mayors, including two other dogs, a cat, a cow and a beer-drinking goat named Mayor Clay Henry III.

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Missing 100-year-old dog tag returned to veteran's family

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Sept. 29, 2016 at 12:35 PM
Follow @oddnewsupi

RANDOLPH, Mass., Sept. 29 (UPI) -- Police in Massachusetts used social media to return a missing piece of war memorabilia to a local veteran's family.

Randolph Police Department released a public appeal to search for the family of a war veteran Joseph E. Hughes whose 100-year-old dog tag was found on the side of the road.

"Within 24 hours the department was able to follow up on several leads and ultimately his family was located and contacted," police said. "As a result, a priceless piece of U.S. History, a World War 1 dog tag issued to Joseph E. Hughes, will be returned to the veteran's eldest grandson of Hughes' namesake."

The police department was able to discover Hughes was deployed to Europe between September 07, 1917 and April 05, 1919 and injured twice before returning to Massachusetts where he was married and had three children.

With the help of the community police were able to uncover several details about the dog tag's owner, but it remained unclear how it wound up on the side of the road.

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Document: Dog tuxedo bought with Arkansas county credit card

yahoo.com

AP October 26, 2016

Associated Press

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (AP) — A former county employee in Arkansas has been arrested after prosecutors accused her of using a county credit card to buy personal items including Arkansas Razorbacks tickets and a tuxedo for her dog.

The Sentinel-Record newspaper reports (http://bit.ly/2eRYyNc) that Kristi Goss was arrested Tuesday on six counts of fraudulent use of a credit card. Goss had worked as administrative assistant for the Garland County judge's office.

According to an affidavit, investigators and auditors flagged about $200,000 in purchases made on the county's credit card, including a diamond bracelet, Razorbacks tickets, pet insurance and the dog tuxedo, which was ordered from Amazon.

Court records do not list an attorney for Goss. Prosecutors have filed a request for a gag order preventing any comment on the case.

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Dog will not face charges in stabbing of owner

kptv.com

Posted: Sep 24, 2016 1:59 AM PDT Updated: Sep 25, 2016 10:55 AM PDT



A woman nurses a wound to her arm caused by a beloved pet dog. (Source: KDVR/CNN)

A woman nurses a wound to her arm caused by a beloved pet dog. (Source: KDVR/CNN)

HUDSON, CO (KDVR/CNN) - A Colorado woman claims her dog tried to stab her and she has the wound to prove it. Mia is a beautiful, energetic dog just more than a year old.

"She's lovable. She'll kill you with kindness," said Celinda Haynes, the dog's owner. Or in this case, she may try with a knife.

"Everybody has had quite a laugh about it," Haynes said.

"I've been in law enforcement a long time and I've always said you can't make this stuff up," said Deputy Zach Johnson with the marshal's service.

Haynes said Mia, tall enough to reach the kitchen counter, picked up a freshly-sharpened knife. "The blade was sticking outward and downward," Haynes said.

Haynes tempted Mia with treats to drop the knife. Mia wanted those treats but not at the cost of her new toy. "When (Mia) went over to eat the treat, she ran the knife across my arm and cut a big old gash about 4 inches long," Haynes said.

Suspecting domestic violence, staff at Plat Valley Medical called the town of Hudson's marshal service.

"When dispatch said that there was a person who was stabbed by a dog, I had to make sure I heard that correctly, and of course, my initial thought was 'what's really going on here?'" Johnson said.

After lots of questions, deputies settled on Mia but she's not talking. "Obviously, we're not charging Mia with anything because she's a dog," Johnson said.

As for Haynes, "I'm still bleeding through my bandages." There's no nerve damage. She just needs time to heal and find a really good hiding place for her knives.

"She even pulls them out of the knife block. Anything for me to chase her, she'll do it," Haynes said. Police have officially listed the case as a "suspicious incident."

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September 25 2016 | For more information on this site, please read our Privacy Policy, and Terms of Service, and Ad Choices.

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Michigan DNR: Please don't dump your pet fish with teeth

Andrew Krietz, WZZM

freep.com

Detroit Free Press
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

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636064711099452942-Luft-Pacu-mouth-July-2014.jpg

Pacu fish(Photo: DNR)

This probably would come as a shock for any angler: reeling in a red-bellied pacu, complete with human-like teeth.

These fish aren't native to Michigan but hail from South America, and they've been caught three times in July, probably because of pet owners who no longer can care for them, according to the state's Department of Natural Resources. Three pacu were reported -- two from Lake St. Clair and one from the Port Huron area, both on the eastern side of Michigan.

The red-bellied pacu, or scientifically known as Piaractus brachypomus, is most common in the continent's Amazon basin but are imported to the U.S. and internationally.

Officials don't consider the fish to be invasive despite it being a non-native fish to Michigan. The DNR says a 2012 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assessment concluded the risk posed by pacus in the U.S. is uncertain because of a lack of research on the fish's negative impacts.

Let's be clear: those square teeth are scary-looking, but they're used to break down nuts and seeds.

If an aquarium owner's pacu has outgrown its tank, there are options to properly take care of it rather than dumping it in the nearest waterway.

“If your pacu has outgrown its tank or begun to feed on your other fish, rather than releasing it into a pond or stream, consider donating or trading it with another hobbyist, an environmental learning center, an aquarium or a zoo,” said Paige Filice of Michigan State University. “You can also check with the pet store where you purchased the fish to see if they will take it back.

Filice is part of a statewide campaign to Reduce Invasive Pet and Plant Escapes, or RIPPLE.

The DNR says an unusual fish is caught, keep it and preserve it on ice or take photos -- don't place it back in the water. Then, contact Seth Herbst, a DNR aquatic invasive species biologist, at 517-284-5841 or herbsts@michigan.gov for help in identification.

Andrew Krietz is a reporter for WZZM.

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Dopey the dwarf falls off boat deck during Disney World show

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Aug. 10, 2016 at 1:06 PM
Follow @oddnewsupi



Dopey takes a tumble. Screenshot: Newsflare

ORLANDO, Fla., Aug. 10 (UPI) -- Dopey the dwarf lived up to his name during a show at Florida's Walt Disney World when he slipped and fell off the deck of a boat.

Video of the Sunday performance at the Orlando theme park shows costumed Disney characters performing the Fantasmic show on a boat.

The actor wearing a Dopey costume from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs loses his footing and slips under a guard rail on the middle floor of the boat.

Dopey lands on the next deck below, nearly taking out the actor wearing a Goofy costume.

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The Pathway, the burning boy and what lies behind the black door?

September 11th 2016

hulldailymail.co.uk

Down The Pathway in Hull is a mysterious black door and the tragedy of the burning boy

By Hull Daily Mail | Posted: September 11, 2016

By Mike Covell



MYSTERY: The Pathway and the Black Door, in Hull's Old Town.

It is one of Hull's most mysterious places. Every day, hundreds of people use The Pathway as a shortcut as they hurry to and from work.

At night, with its dim lighting, and air of menace, this narrow alleyway between Alfred Gelder Street and Bowlalley Lane, feels like a throwback to another time.

At the southern end, where the walkway thins, stands a mysterious little black door. Although once bricked up, the upper half still of this door can still be seen, with a large metal fixture hanging from it. What lies behind it?

Over the years, many people have wondered about the history of The Pathway and the black door, but other than a small paving slab at the southern end which states “formerly Cook's Buildings", little is known about the place.

To really dig into the mystery, I had to go back in time through the old newspaper archives. There are discovered tales of crime and tragedy.

1) How did The Pathway get its name?

The Pathway, as it is known today, was originally called Cook's Buildings, a place that was no stranger to crime, criminals, and tragedy. The name came from one of the many landlords who owned land and properties in this location and 200 years ago it was considered a dirty, smelly and unpleasant place to live.

2) The tragedy of the burning boy

In June 1828, the residents of Cook's Buildings witnessed a great tragedy when eight-year-old Henry Hayes was playing with wooden sticks near his fireplace. His mother was in bed and his elder sister was collecting wood in the back yard. When she entered their house she saw her little brother on fire. She dragged him into the yard, and neighbours tried to put out the flames, but it was too late, and little Henry died on the spot where people now walk to work.

3) The Hull comedian's last laugh

In 1831, James Garton, who lived in Cook's Buildings, died from an inflammation of the brain. Garton was well known and loved in Hull on account of his career as a comedian at the Theatre Royal in Hull and York. He was just 34 at the time of his death and great mourning was seen around the town.

4) Crime and criminals

In the 1860s, the court columns of the local papers were full of tales about Cook's Buildings. Hundreds of incidents were reported, including thefts, burglaries, prostitution, violence, drunkenness, assaults, attacks on police officers, and coining, when fraudsters would create counterfeit coins – an offence considered so serious, it once carried a death sentence.





A plan of Cook's Buildings and (right) the site today.

5) Illegal brewing houses

One of the most popular pastimes was the illegal brewing and sale of alcohol. One case was heard at the Hull Police Court in 1889, when middle-aged Sarah Brownlow, of No. 14 Cook's Buildings, was accused of selling intoxicating liquors. She had turned her front room into a bar and was offering two bottles of homemade beer for a shilling.

The police put the house under observation and watched an endless parade of men visiting and walking away with beer, but when the police knocked they were refused entry. In her defence, Brownlow claimed that she was simply giving the beer away, but the judge did not see it that way and fined her £25.

6) An unhealthy place

In April 1900, Cook's Buildings were condemned as “unhealthy and unsanitary" and closed for demolition. A number of the buildings were emptied and purchased by large companies, while the smaller buildings, rendered unfit for human habitation, were knocked down. However, it was decided to retain The Pathway as the shortcut it remains today.




The entrances to The Pathway in Alfred Gelder Street (left) and Bowlalley Lane.

7) So, what's behind the Black Door?

At the southern end of The Pathway, just before you reach Bowlalley Lane, stands a black brick wall. Within the wall is a mysterious black door, now bricked up, but the top half of the wooden door still hangs from its ancient hinges.

A number of people have asked what this door is, imagining a secret chamber, or a passageway. The door's hidden secret is actually far more mundane, but stands as a fine example of how the two social classes of old Hull entered and exited the building.

The door belonged to 16 Bowlalley Lane, previously home to W. Woolley, a firm of solicitors who operated from this site in the 1820s. The door was there to allow the back-room staff and servants to enter the premises away from the main street, so they wouldn't be seen by potential clients.

Over the decades, other solicitors and stockbrokers continued to use the building. Today, it is home to residential apartments.

Comments

- ClementAttlee | September 11 2016, 9:50PM

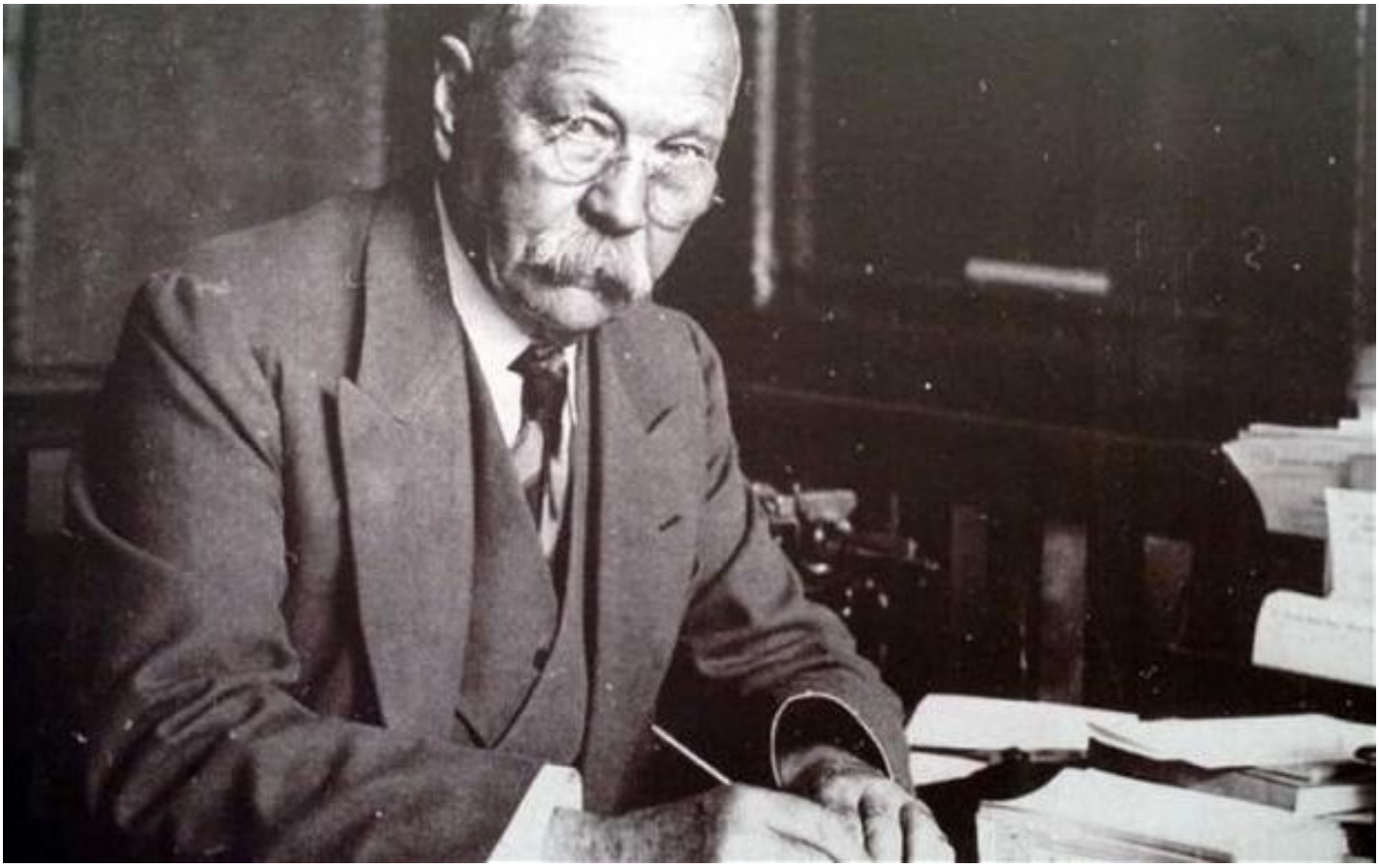
  Great work, Mike Covell. Always fascinating to learn about the history you report on. I didn't even know so many of these little back alleys existed. Amazing.

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The Telegraph

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle cleared of Piltdown Man hoax



Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was said to have buried the fossils to embarrass scientists
CREDIT: PAUL GROVER

By **Sarah Knapton**, SCIENCE EDITOR

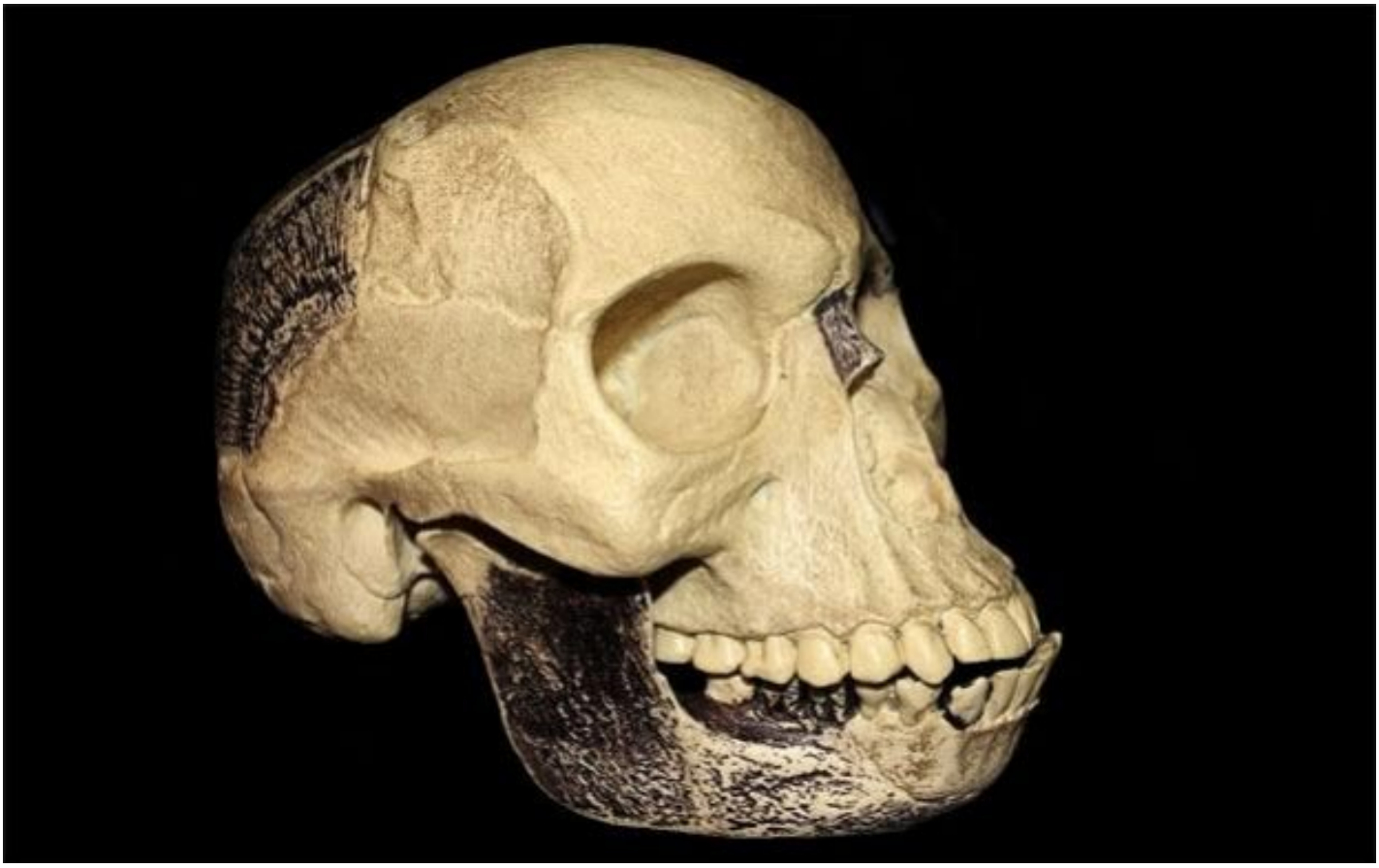
10 AUGUST 2016 • 6:00AM

The hundred-year-old mystery of who hoaxed the scientific world with the Piltdown Man fossils may finally have been solved...and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is in the clear

Researchers at the Natural History Museum and Liverpool John Moores University have found new evidence which points the finger at amateur archaeologist Charles Dawson, who originally found the remains, but who was thought incapable of such an elaborate deception.

The new results clear Conan Doyle, the Sherlock Holmes author, who many believed had perpetrated the stunt to embarrass scientists for mocking his spiritualist beliefs.

Dr Isabelle De Groote from Liverpool John Moores University, the lead author on the paper, said: "Although multiple individuals have been accused of producing the fake fossils, it is clear from our analysis that this work was likely all carried out by one forger: Charles Dawson."



The skull piece and jawbone of Piltdown Man which are now housed at the Natural History Museum in London

On December 18, 1912, newspapers across the globe ran with the sensational story that the 'Missing Link' between humans and apes had been found, proving that Charles Darwin's theory of evolution was correct.

Fragments of a fossil human skull and ape-like jawbone were unveiled at a meeting of the Geological Society in London on the same day and named Eoanthropus dawsoni after Dawson, who claimed to have uncovered them in a gravel pit at Barkham Manor, Piltdown, in Sussex.

After Dawson found another tooth from a site two miles away in 1915, 'Dawn man' became accepted as part of the human family for nearly 30 years. Dawson died the following year, but by the late 1940s experts were seriously questioning the find and is was finally

debunked in 1953 when scientists proved the specimen was a human skull and orang-utan jawbone.

operate a client's account. I opened this one for a particular transaction.

PILTDOWN HOAX CONFIRMED

EXPERTS' FINDINGS

By Our Science Correspondent

An exhaustive re-examination of the "Piltdown remains" by 12 experts in various fields of research has "completely confirmed the hypothesis of a hoax, and experimental work has shown that all the features of the Piltdown teeth and jawbone can be reproduced artificially. Findings are given in the latest bulletin of the Natural History Museum, published to-day.

Sir Gavin de Beer, director of the museum, writes in a foreword: "Not one of the Piltdown finds genuinely came from Piltdown." The remains from which experts of the time reconstructed the "Dawn Man," included part of a skull, a jawbone, a tooth and a number of crude tools of flint and bone.

Mr. Charles Dawson, a Sussex solicitor, now dead, took them to Sir Arthur Smith Woodward, keeper of the Department of Geology at the British Museum.

The report does not name the person believed to be responsible for the hoax, but it is no secret that


those responsible for the report believe that the man was Charles Dawson.

CONSCRIPTION PACT

How The Telegraph reported the hoax in 1953

But the mystery of who created the hoax was never solved. The skull and jawbone had been expertly boiled and weathered to give it the same colour as the gravel in which it was found, while the primate teeth had been filed down to give them a human-like wear patterns.

Dawson was a solicitor by trade and many experts questioned whether he had the paleontological expertise to pull off the trick.

Suspicion fell on Conan Doyle who lived nearby, played golf at Piltdown and was an avid fossil collector. He even wrote about how easy it would be to create a fossil hoax in his novel The Lost World.

In the last decade of his life he was ridiculed by the scientific community for supporting spiritualism so many believed he had perpetrated the hoax to embarrass researchers.



A painting of Charles Dawson showing Piltdown Man to scientists

But new DNA evidence has shown that the tooth discovered in 1915 by Dawson came from the same jaw as the original skull and jawbone, suggesting he had planted them both. The chances of Dawson stumbling across two hoax sites, two miles apart, are beyond credulity, say scientists.

The researchers also found that dental putty had been used to re-set the teeth in the jaw and to reconstruct one of the teeth which fell apart while it was being ground down, suggesting the work of an amateur.

Dr Chris Stringer, an anthropologist from the Natural History Museum said: “Conan Doyle was known to play golf at the Piltdown site and had even given Dawson a lift in his car to the area.

“But he was a public man and very busy and it is very unlikely that he would have had the time. In terms of motivation he would have got back at the scientists who mocked him for expressing a belief in spiritualism.

“So there are some coincidences, but I think they are just coincidences. When you look at the fossil evidence you can only associate Dawson with all the finds.

"And Dawson was known to be personally ambitious. He wanted professional recognition. He wanted to be a member of the Royal Society and he was after an MBE. He wanted people to stop seeing him as an amateur."



A postcard showing excavations at Piltdown with Charles Dawson picture left and Arthur Smith Woodward to the right CREDIT: NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

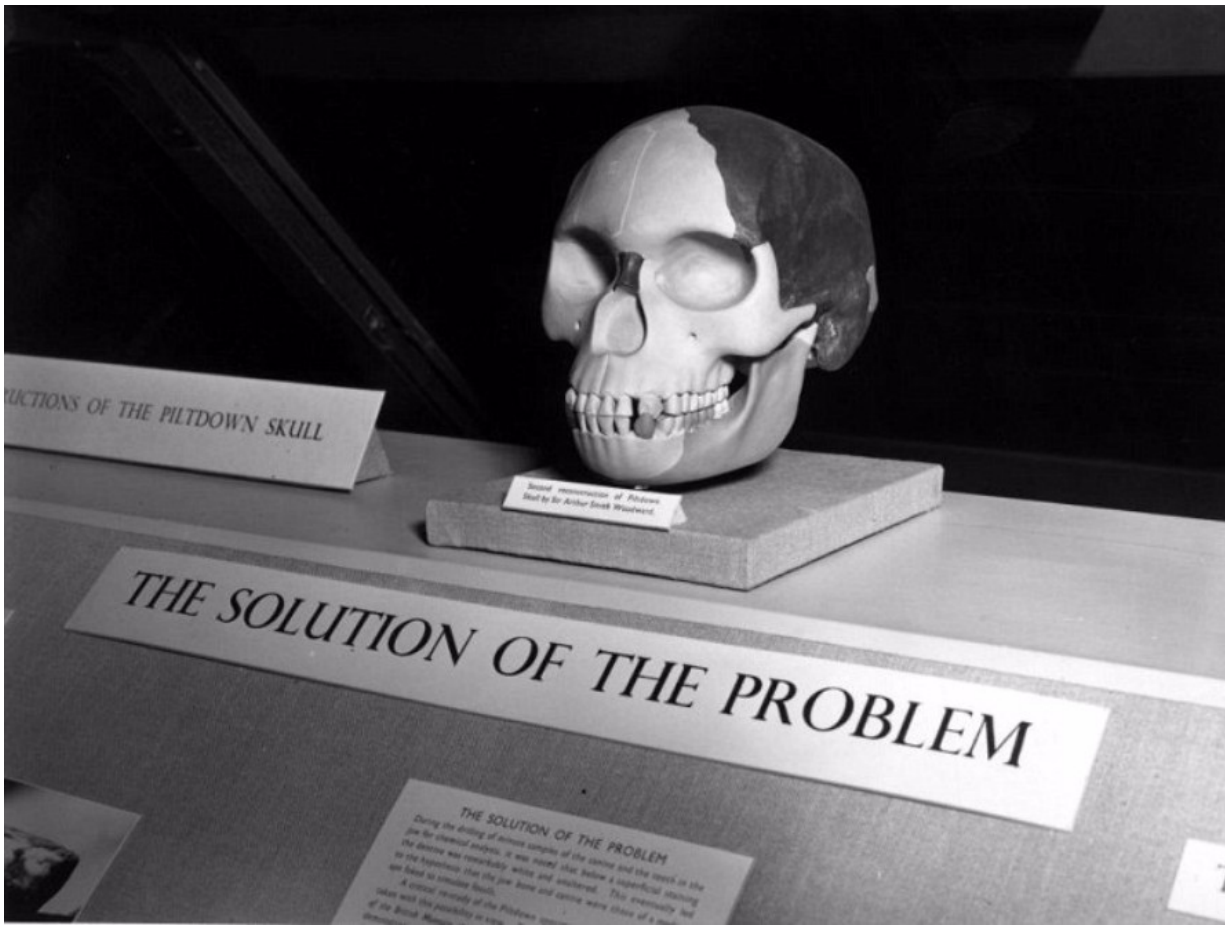
The new evidence also exonerates the renowned British Museum palaeontologist Arthur Smith Woodward. Dawson sent his original finds to Smith Woodward who agreed to join him in his excavations at Piltdown. During the digs only Dawson found further fossils, but Smith Woodward remained convinced 'Dawn Man' was real and spent the latter years of his life trying to find new evidence.

"It really affected Smith Woodward's career," added Stringer. "He was a great expert in fossil fishes but Piltdown Man is now what he is known for."

The team is now planning to study the human remains of Piltdown Man as well as a strange wooden cricket bat object found at the site.

The new research is published in the journal Royal Society Open Science.

Piltdown Man | The history of a hoax

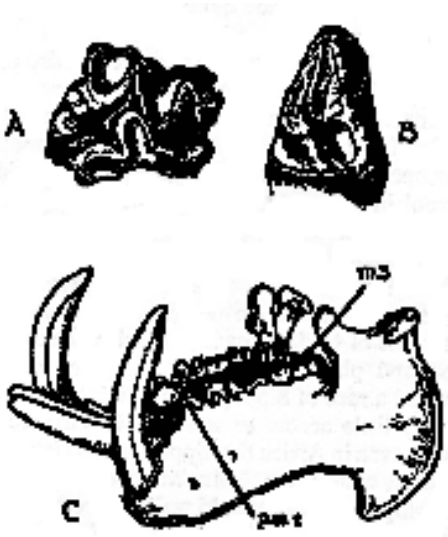


18 December 1912
'Missing Link' found



Amateur archaeologist Charles Dawson unveils fossil of 'Piltdown Man' to Geological Society in London claiming it represents the 'missing link' between humans and apes which lived 500,000 years ago. It is dubbed 'Dawn Man'

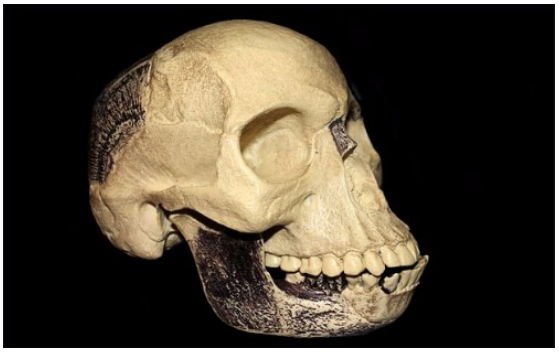
1915
New examples of 'Dawn Man' found



Dawson claims to have found a

molar from another 'Dawn Man' specimen two miles away from the original site leading scientists to accept the discovery. He dies a year later.

1949
Tests show Piltdown skull is too young



Dr Kenneth Oakley of the National History Museum tests the skull and jawbone of Piltdown Man and finds they are probably only 500 years old

21 November 1953
Piltdown Man confirmed as a hoax

account. I never intended to operate a client's account. I opened this one for a particular transaction.

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EXPERTS' FINDINGS

By Our Science Correspondent

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CONSCRIPTION PACT

A military service agreement be-

1978
A new suspect

Piltdown forger named

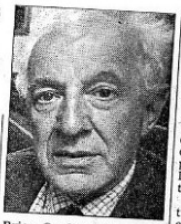
Rivalry of academics at Natural History Museum led to hoax, writes Tim Radford

THE forger behind the greatest scientific fraud of the century is unmasked today. A trunk concealed for more than half a century in the loft of the Natural History Museum contained damning evidence of the identity of the hoaxer behind Piltdown Man.

The news left the Natural History Museum tight-lipped yesterday. The guilty party proved to be Martin Hinton, curator of zoology at the museum at the time.

Piltdown Man was a human skull with an apelike jaw. It was unearthed by an antiquary called Charles Dawson in 1912, and hailed as the "missing link" and the "earliest Englishman".

The find was made in a gravel pit at Piltdown in East Sussex. It was science's prime specimen of human evolution until 1953, when some ana-



Brian Gardiner discovered identity of bitter fraudster

lysts took a second look. They promptly pronounced it a crude forgery, a doctored marriage of the bones of a human and an orang-utan, whittled to fit together, and stained to appear very old.

From then on, detective-scientists have been hunting the forger. The finger of suspicion has pointed at some bizarre individuals, including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who lived nearby and notoriously liked a practical joke.

But today in Nature, the truth is finally out. All the evidence now points to an inside job. The villain was probably Hinton, who had a vendetta against his colleague, the keeper of palaeontology at the time, Arthur Smith Woodward.

The latest palaeontologist turned detective, Brian Gardiner of Kings College London, plans to reveal all in his presidential address to the Linnaean Society in London tomorrow.

The evidence actually turned up during an overhaul of the museum's south-west tower 20 years ago, but the significance of the trunk, with its array of stained bones, did not sink in for nearly two decades, when Andrew Currant, of the museum, and Professor Gardiner started working on the contents.

Many of the samples were stained with a chemical to make them appear aged: the same used in the Piltdown bones.

"Hinton was known as a great practical joker," said Prof Gardiner. "But this wasn't just a practical joke, this was a vendetta."

Suspicion falls on Martin Hinton, a Natural History Museum curator in 1912, when an old trunk is discovered

1997
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is named as hoaxer



showing he had experimented with staining fossils. In 1996 Professor Brian Gardiner, of King's College London said he is "100 per cent" certain that Hinton is the hoaxer



American historian Richard Milner claims Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was responsible for the deception and that there is a cryptic message hidden in The Lost World in which he confesses his guilt.

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05 Aug 2016, 5:17pm

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'Astonishingly preserved' ancient shipwrecks accidentally found during seabed mapping

Mon at 8:03pm Mon 24 Oct 2016, 8:03pm

abc.net.au

ABC News

Updated

Dozens of shipwrecks, the first of their kind seen from bygone empires, have been a "complete bonus" discovery for researchers mapping the Black Sea.

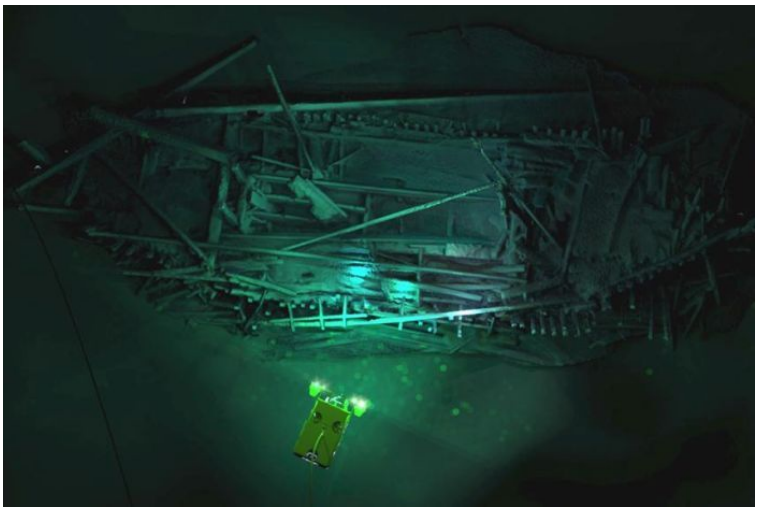


Photo: The shipwrecks were found using advanced underwater survey systems. (Supplied: Rodrigo Pacheco-Ruiz)



Photo: Some wrecks found, including this one, were from the Ottoman Empire. (Supplied: Rodrigo Pacheco-Ruiz)

The international team of scientists came across more than 40 wrecks while surveying the seabed near Bulgaria to understand how quickly land in the area was inundated following the last ice age 20,000 years ago.

"The wrecks are a complete bonus, but a fascinating discovery, found during the course of our extensive geophysical surveys," Professor Jon Adams, lead investigator on the Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project, said.

The centuries-old wrecks, including ships from the Byzantine and Ottoman empires, provide the first view of vessels previously known only through historical sources.

Most other wrecks from these time periods have decomposed due to having sunk in shallower waters.

But the Black Sea discoveries can be seen with their upper decks still intact, with some ships' masts still standing and rigging in place.

Professor Adams said these wrecks were "astonishingly preserved" due to the lack of oxygen in the Black Sea below 150 metres.

The wrecks were found using advanced underwater survey systems aboard the Stril Explorer.

Images of the underwater discoveries were created by combining thousands of photos to create an accurate 3D model, using millions of points to align each photo in a process called photogrammetry.

"We've been able to capture some astonishing images without disturbing the sea bed," Professor Adams said.

"Certainly no-one has achieved models of this completeness on shipwrecks at these depths."



Photo: The stern of this Ottoman-era wreck was "astonishingly preserved" due to the lack of oxygen in the Black Sea below 150 metres. (Supplied: Rodrigo Pacheco Ruiz and Rodrigo Ortiz)



Photo: The discoveries, including this medieval-aged wreck, were a "complete bonus" for the team. (Supplied: Rodrigo Pacheco-Ruiz)

Professor Adams said the ships were likely trading ships rather than battle ships, due to their positions far out at sea.

First posted Mon at 7:50pmMon 24 Oct 2016, 7:50pm

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Dozens of paintings stolen from heir of Steinberg grocery chain destined for organized crime: expert

| October 21, 2016 | Last Updated: Oct 22 10:35 AM ET nationalpost.com

Jacques Boissinot / CPSûreté du Québec

Dozens of paintings stolen from the residence of a wealthy couple in the Laurentians are likely destined to end up in the hands of organized crime figures who value artwork as a form of currency, an expert on the subject says.

According to La Presse, 25 to 30 paintings were stolen from a home owned by Mitzi Steinberg-Dobrin, heir to the former Steinberg grocery chain, and her husband Mel Dobrin, a former president of the same chain. Some of the paintings are estimated to be worth more than $100,000.

Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Sgt. Annie Thibodeau confirmed that experts with the provincial police force's investigative unit specializing in stolen artwork are working on the case in Ivry-sur-le-Lac, a town about 110 kilometres north of Montreal, along with colleagues based in the Laurentians.

The couple's son said his parents had amassed a large collection of artwork over the past four decades. The theft appears to have been pulled off by an expert, or experts, in the field as the home's alarm system was turned off and the thief, or thieves, apparently selected specific types of paintings while leaving others behind.

Alain Lacoursière, a former detective with the Montreal police who specialized in recovering stolen artwork, said valuable stolen paintings often end up in the hands of organized crime figures even if they can never be hung on a wall and appreciated for their beauty.

"To people in organized crime they represent 20 per cent of the cash value of the painting. They are easy to transport and they are easy to get across a border," he said adding he has seen cases where expensive paintings ended up in Russia or Colombia and were used to purchase drugs from traffickers based in those countries.

"The artwork remains a form of currency throughout. They remain hidden away in a closet. It's not like in the movies where some guy who really appreciates art has a secret room in his mansion that only he can enjoy. I have never seen that in my entire career."

He noted one case that stands out in his memory involved artwork stolen from homes in Westmount and Outremont that was later found, in October 2000, in the Montreal-area home of Joseph Ghaleb, a notorious loanshark who had ties to the Hells Angels and the Montreal underworld who was murdered in 2004.

Lacoursière, who now has his own appraisal company, Expertises Alain Lacoursière, said that the list of people in Quebec who could have pulled of such a heist is a very short one.

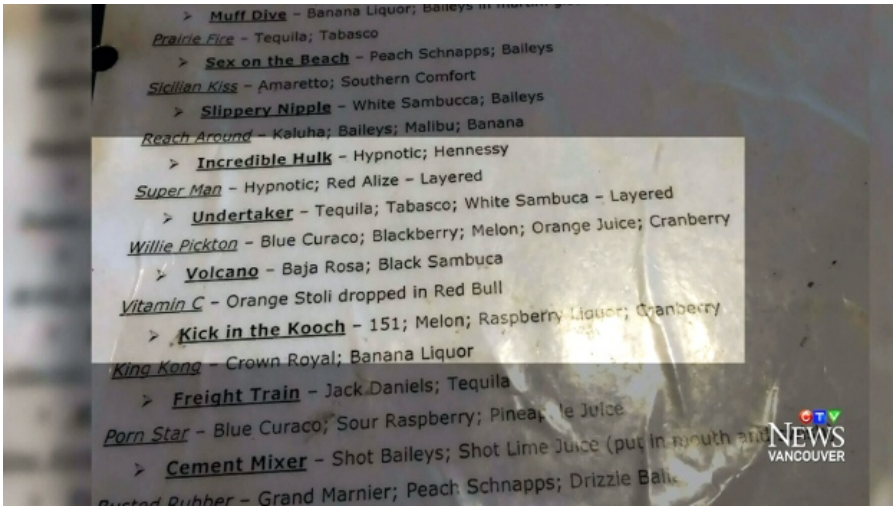
"There are three guys, maybe five tops, who can pull off a job like that – where they know a lot about art. You have to possess a great deal of knowledge about art to do something like that," Lacoursière said while adding later he was referring specifically to three people in particular. "The Sûreté du Québec knows who they are and will likely want to talk to them."

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Published Friday, August 12, 2016 3:43PM PDT bc.ctvnews.ca

B.C. restaurant names drink after serial killer Robert Pickton



Serial-killer-themed drink pulled from menu

A Surrey woman who works with victims of sexual assaults is outraged after finding a drink named after a notorious B.C. serial killer on a restaurant menu.

Robert "Willie" Pickton is serving a life sentence at Kent Institution in the Fraser Valley, after being convicted of killing six women. The remains or DNA of 33 women were found on his Port Coquitlam farm.

He also confessed to an undercover police officer that he had murdered 49 women -- many of them sex workers from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Photos



Surrey Wings

A Surrey Wings location previously listed the 'Willie Pickton' on its drink menu. (Ben Miljure / CTV Vancouver)

That's why finding a boozy shooter named after him at Surrey Wings has left such a bad taste in Rebecca Brass's mouth.

"My initial response was complete shock that I'm sitting in a restaurant that prides themselves as a family restaurant, meanwhile they're profiting off of families' tragedies and trauma," said Brass.

She discovered the "Willie Pickton" – a drink made of blue curacao, blackberry, melon, orange juice and cranberry -- on the menu at Wings while eating lunch one day. Brass immediately sent an email to the restaurant's head office explaining why she found it offensive.

"Businesses, just like us, need to be held accountable for perpetuating violence against women," she said.

Nobody from the restaurant, which has 11 B.C. locations, would talk in person about the drink, but in a statement the company blamed it on a manager who used to work at the Surrey location.

"We have sent an internal memo out to notify the restaurants that all drink menus and lists need to be approved by the Head Office first and always as per our procedures and guidelines," reads part of the statement.

Working as a sexual assault counsellor with Women Against Violence Against Women, Brass personally knows people with family members murdered by Pickton.

"It's shocking, but at the same time it's not, because the desensitization of violence against women is real," she said. "It's like society thinks it's OK."

The drink no longer appears on the menu at the Wings in Surrey but Brass says she still won't go back.

Though he's been locked up as part of a life sentence handed down in 2007, Pickton also made headlines earlier this year when he managed to smuggle a book he wrote behind bars outside of a maximum security prison.

Pickton's communications are closely monitored, but he passed the manuscript to a former cellmate, who sent it to a friend on the outside.

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Drinking 'Corpse Water' Isn't As Bad As You Might Expect

laist.com

by Emma G. Gallegos in News on Feb 22, 2013 10:10 am

*This water doesn't look so bad (*Photo by Pressmaster via Shutterstock)
Fortunately, most of us have probably never had to think too hard about the health effects of drinking water that has come into contact with a rotting corpse. But that has all changed with the tragic—and so far unexplained—death of a Canadian tourist whose body was found in the water tank of the Cecil Hotel.

Initially, when the body of 21-year-old Elisa Lam was discovered in the water tank on the roof of the hotel, public officials assured people that it was totally fine to drink the water that came out of that tank. We, as well as the hotel's guests, couldn't quite, well, stomach that explanation.

The Daily Beast has an explainer today based on forensic science that goes into why drinking what has now been morbidly named "corpse water" is actually not so bad.

Here we go: The human body decays in five stages. The first stage called "fresh" is the immediate aftermath of death when the anaerobic bacteria that are already in our body, particularly our digestive tract, begin to really proliferate. This leads to the second stage of death "bloat," which is exactly what it sounds like. These anaerobic bacteria release a lot of gas that causes a corpse to get puffy and smell really, really terrible.

The next stage is called "active decay," which is when bugs pick the corpse clean and the liquefied corpse begins to spill over into the environment. There are two stages after that—"advanced decay" and "remains"—but Lam's body was likely found at this third stage. That means that billions or trillions of bacteria had overtaken her body and— through her liquefied tissue—had spilled into the water supply of the Cecil Hotel.

But here's the thing: both our own bodies and our water supply systems are pretty good at dealing with bacteria. Chlorine added to the water supply probably killed off a lot of the bacteria emanating from Lam's corpse. However, it likely wouldn't have killed off all of it. That's where our second line of defense comes in: our stomachs. They have harsh hydrochloric acid that as The Daily Beast says "can take a pretty good wallop."

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health did end up issuing a "do-not-drink order" while its lab analyzed the water. Their biggest concern wasn't the corpse itself, exactly, but whether there was "fecal contamination."

The Daily Beast suggests that the worst case scenario—biologically—for drinking water from the tank where a corpse is found is that you vomit and don't feel so hot for a day or two. It's like mild food poisoning—it won't kill you.

Of course, we'd prefer run-of-the-mill food poisoning any day. The worst part about drinking "corpse water" is finding out. One guest Michael Baugh, 27, told the media: "The moment we found out, we felt a bit sick to the stomach, quite literally, especially having drank the water, we're not well mentally."

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Wells Fargo employees on the front lines say they were so stressed, they were chugging hand sanitizer and having anxiety attacks

Rebecca Harrington Oct. 20, 2016, 8:02 PM 26,849
2016-10-20

businessinsider.com

Rick Wilking/ Reuters

The Wells Fargo scandal ousted its CEO John Stumpf, drew Congressional ire, and resulted in a $185 million settlement with federal regulators.

But employees who say they were forced to open the 2 million accounts to hit quotas were deeply affected, too. Five of them told their stories to The New York Times on Thursday, sharing the pressure they were under and how stressed it made them.

Angie Payden, a banker in Hudson, Wisconsin, from 2011 to 2014, said she was so worried about coercing customers to open accounts they didn't need that she started drinking hand sanitizer as a way to cope.

"One morning, before meeting with a customer, in which I knew I was going to have to sell unneeded services, I had a severe panic attack. I went to the bathroom and took a drink of some hand sanitizer," she told The Times. "This immediately reduced my anxiety. From that point, I began drinking the hand sanitizer all over the bank. In late November 2012, I was completely addicted to hand sanitizer and drinking at least a bottle a day during my workday."

Payden said she had to leave the bank to seek treatment.

Scott T., a teller in Galesburg, Illinois, in 2009, told The Times that he spent time in the bathroom crying because he was so stressed.

"It got so bad that one day I left work to go to the emergency room because I thought I was having a heart attack. It turns out it was an anxiety attack," he said. "I thought I was going to have a heart attack or stroke if I stayed any longer."

Julie Miller, a banker and manager in Allentown, Pennsylvania, from 2005 to 2013, said she was telling her story to help other employees who may have felt as agonized as she was.

"I filed a wrongful termination lawsuit," Miller told The Times. "They gave me some small compensation to shut up and go away. The reason I'm not shutting up is that I've realized how many employees were in the same position as me."

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VR, drones could unlock secrets about mysterious Plain of Jars in Laos

By Amy Sherden , Dominique Pile, Catalyst
Mon at 8:33pm Mon 17 Oct 2016, 8:33pm

abc.net.au

ABC News

Virtual reality and drones could unlock secrets about the mysterious Plain of Jars in Laos

Updated



Photo: The sites contains ancient stone jars that Australian researchers say were used in burial practices. (Supplied: Australian National University)

Ancient, monumental sandstone jars up to two-and-a-half metres high dot the landscape in central Laos in seemingly random patterns — what was their purpose? Who built the sites? Where did they live?

These questions have perplexed locals and visitors for centuries but now researchers from Australia's Monash University and the Australian National University are using drone technology and virtual reality tools to remotely dig for answers, and explore untouched sites of the aptly named Plain of Jars.

For decades, the danger of unexploded bombs has made archaeological exploration there risky.

Over 270 million cluster bombs rained down on Laos from 1964 to 1973 as part of a US campaign to halt the spread of communism through Indo China.

About 30 per cent of the bombs did not explode on impact, leaving about 80 million bombs still on the surface, or just below.

Only a handful of the 80 or so known sites have been cleared of ordnance and archaeologists have had to use well-trodden paths or enlist local people to navigate them through safe pathways to sites of interest such as quarries.

Now drone technology is opening up new possibilities for exploration and discovery.

"The use of drones is critically important for us because we can look at even a cleared site," Dr Louise Shewan told Catalyst.

"We can survey it with a drone, but often the adjacent quarry site isn't cleared so we can at least fly the drones over the quarry site and get an understanding of what's there."

After the drone has completed its surveillance, the photographs are uploaded into software that generates a very realistic photo 3D model of the site.

Dr Shewan and her colleague Dr Dougald O'Reilly then use Monash's CAVE2 — an immersive 3D facility — to explore the site remotely and securely with virtual reality glasses.

"This technology allows us to compare at a macro scale the different types of sites, the distribution of jars, so there's a lot of different angles that you can use to approach the data," Dr O'Reilly said.

Currently, helicopters mounted with lidar are used to reveal what lies beneath jungle covered sites but the Monash team are in the process of developing a drone equipped with software that will enable it to fly autonomously over and under tree canopy while analysing the data in real time.

Earlier this year, in a collaborative project with the Laos Government, the ANU/Monash team revealed that the Plain of Jars was used for different types of human burial practice, but there's still no understanding of how the jars got there, who created them, or evidence of where the people who are buried there might have lived.

The archaeologists hope to use the new drone to look for drag marks where the jars have been brought from the quarry areas, habitation areas and ceramic scatters.

"We can use this technology for mapping and data interpretation, we can look at the transportation of the jars," Dr O'Reilly said.

"With the use of drones, we could probably access all of the sites.

"Everybody does love a good mystery but every good mystery has to have a solution at the end."

The team hope that using virtual reality as a digital record and archiving tool will win the Plain of Jars UNESCO World Heritage status.



GIF: A drone surveys one of the Plain of Jars sites.

AEDT = Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time which is 11 hours ahead of UTC (Greenwich Mean Time)

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U.S. Coast Guard seizes drug-running submarine filled with cocaine

upi.com

By Ed Adamczyk | Updated Oct. 28, 2016 at 10:59 AM
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SAN DIEGO, Oct. 28 (UPI) -- The U.S. Coast Guard seized more than 5,600 pounds of cocaine from a custom-built, drug-running submarine, it announced at its naval base in San Diego.

The vessel, a "self-propelled semisubmersible" or SPSS, was captured Sept. 6 in Pacific Ocean waters off the coast of Central America by the Coast Guard Cutter Waesche, based out of Alameda, Calif. Five suspects were also apprehended while attempting to scuttle the vessel by sinking it.

USCG boarding parties found a hold 8 feet deep containing cocaine wrapped in plastic bags and on pallets. Before the vessel sank, officials recovered about 2.8 tons of cocaine, about a third of what they believe was in the hold. It was the sixth drug-running sub seized by the Coast Guard during the fiscal year ending Sept. 30.

The Waesche transferred 19.5 tons of cocaine to shore Thursday in an event at which it was announced a record 416,000 pounds of cocaine was recovered in 260 drug interdictions during the year. The estimated value of the cocaine was $5.6 billion.

"With every interdiction, we learn more about transnational organized crime networks that generate profit and proliferate power from a laundry list of illicit activities," said Vice Adm. Fred Midgette, commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area.

Added Capt. James Passarelli, commanding officer of the Waesche, "Our Coast Guardsmen face significant risks posed by dangerous criminal organizations. Our crew preserved valuable evidence and kept millions of dollars of illicit narcotics off America's streets."

The cocaine is typically sent by custom-built submarines from Central America to Mexico, where it is smuggled into the United States overland. The Waesche patrols an area of the Pacific Ocean twice the size of the continental United States and known as the Western Hemisphere Transit Zone, where the Coast Guard seized 69 percent of ocean-delivered narcotics in the past year, it said.

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Tulsa Police: Intoxicated Man Arrested For Riding Horse With Toddler

TULSA, Oklahoma -

newson6.com

Posted: Jan 21, 2014 7:12 AM PST Updated: Jan 21, 2014 7:17 PM PST



Booking photo of Dennis Byers. [Tulsa County jail]



Home of the child.

A Tulsa man was arrested for public intoxication and child endangerment after he was found riding a horse with a child, but the man didn't know who the three-year-old boy belonged to.

According to police, the man took the child for a ride on the horse, got drunk, then, didn't know where to return the child.

In Tulsa, near 56 Street North and Lewis, it's not uncommon to see people riding horses. But police say what happened on Monday night was a little unusual.

Corporal Greg Smith said Dennis Byers met with a man who wanted to buy a horse for his three-year-old son.

"The horse owner was going to ride over to the child's house and let the child ride with him with the father following," said Smith.

At some point, Smith said, the father got a work related phone call and stopped following Byers and his son.

Nearly five hours passed before police got a call about a drunk man riding a horse with a small child.

Investigators said Byers started knocking on doors and asking if anyone knew who the three-year-old was.

"He was trying to leave the child at various houses," Smith said. "He didn't know where the people were. He didn't know where the child belonged and obviously he wasn't properly supervising the

child."

According to arrest records, Byers had blood shot eyes, slurred speech, trouble standing and investigators could smell alcohol on his breath.

"The people that called in did the right thing and they were also very helpful in helping us locate the people when they came back into the area," said Smith.

Investigators then had to figure out who the child was and where his father lived. Tips led detectives to a house near Pine and Lewis.

"(He) didn't know where his child was for four or five hours, or who he was with, or how to get in touch with anyone. That seems a little dangerous for the child," Smith said.

The little boy is now in DHS custody while investigators determine if his house is a safe place for him to live.

According to the police report, Byers told officers he had an alcoholic beverage at 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. The arrest report says Byers is on probation out of Missouri for child endangerment.

Police booked Byers into the Tulsa County jail on public intoxication and child neglect complaints. Jail records show Byers' bond was $50,100 with a court appearance set for January 28.

Some of the information in this news story may have been provided by law enforcement with the request News On 6 inform the public of, and/or assist in locating a person in connection with, a police investigation. News On 6 can make no independent verification of the accuracy of the information, photographs and/or video provided to it by police or other law enforcement agencies.

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FHP: Drunken woman found with handcuffs, guns after wrong-way crash on I-4

wftv.com

- Updated: Oct 24, 2016 - 5:16 PM



MAITLAND, Fla. - A 32-year-old woman was arrested Saturday on DUI charges after she drove the wrong way on Interstate 4 in Maitland and crashed into a barrier, according to the Florida Highway Patrol.

FHP said in an arrest report that it received about 13 calls to 911 about the driver, who was going west on I-4 East.

Troopers said when they approached the crashed car, Angela Sammons got out of the sedan without shoes, and that when a trooper handed Sammons her shoes she put them on the wrong feet.

The FHP report stated Sammons was stumbling and staggering on her feet, and did not know where she was or where she was driving to.

Sammons was placed in the back of a patrol car, where she fell asleep, troopers said.

FHP said when a trooper woke Sammons up and asked her if she was OK, she slurred her words and said she was tired and wanted to go home.

Troopers said Sammons refused a field sobriety and Breathalyzer tests.

Channel 9 found out that Sammons was an officer for the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco.

The state said Sammons voluntarily left her position last year.

Troopers said they found multiple Florida driver's licenses in her purse, and loaded guns and handcuffs in her car.

Sammons was booked into the Orange County Jail on charges of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, involving a vehicle crash, FHP said.

Her bail was set at $500.

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The Earliest English Poet

blogs.bl.uk

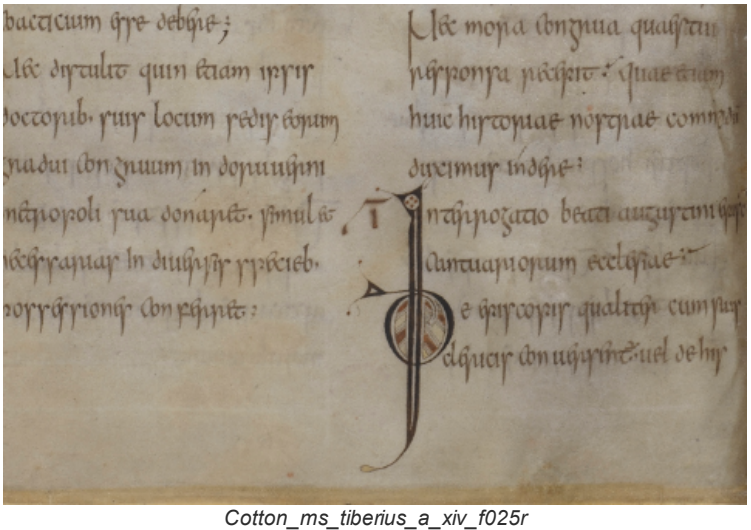
11 February 2016

The Earliest English Poet

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Today is the feast day of Caedmon, the first known English poet. As well as being the first named poet in the English literary tradition, he is also a significant figure in the history of people who hate singing in public, people who develop new talents later in life, and of cowherds.

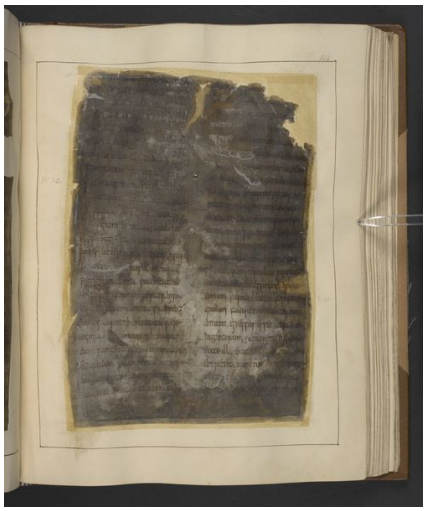
Caedmon's work and the story of his life are described in the *Ecclesiastical History of English People* written by the eighth-century monk, Bede. An eighth-century manuscript of this work-- which was possibly even copied at Bede's own monastery of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow-- has recently been uploaded to our Digitised Manuscripts website as part of our Anglo-Saxon digitisation project. Sadly, it was damaged in the Ashburnham House fire in 1731, but it is still somewhat legible. In it, Bede gives us some biographical detail about Caedmon. Although we might imagine that English's first poet would have been a highly educated individual, Caedmon was, in fact, a cowherd at the monastery of Whitby who did not take religious orders 'until he was well advanced in years'. In this sense, Caedmon is a remarkable figure in Bede's history, as he is one of the few non-elite figures to get a mention.



Cotton_ms_tiberius_a_xiv_f025r

Detail of initials from Bede, Ecclesiastical History of the English People, England (Wearmouth-Jarrow?), mid-8th-early 9th century, Cotton Tiberius A XIV, ff. 25r

Little in Caedmon's early life suggested that he might become one of the greatest poets of his age. Ever the retiring type, he was so shy about singing or speaking in public that, according to Bede, when people began singing at parties, he would leave 'as soon as he saw the harp approaching him' (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, iv.24).



Cotton_ms_tiberius_a_xiv_f144r

Page containing Bede's account of Caedmon, from Bede, Ecclesiastical History of the English People, England (Wearmouth-Jarrow?), mid-8th-early 9th century, Cotton Tiberius A XIV, ff. 144r

It was only later in life that he began to write verse and compose song. Bede recounts how one night, when he was sleeping in the cowshed, Caedmon had a vision. When he woke, he remembered the song he had sung in his dream, and astounded everyone at the abbey with his beautiful poetry. Later on, he would impress the monastery's leaders, including the abbess St Hilda, with his capacity to compose verse on complex theological topics which the monks and nuns discussed with him. (Caedmon might make a suitable patron saint for interdisciplinary work.)

Unfortunately all but one of Caedmon's poems are lost. The sole surviving example is known as Caedmon's Hymn and survives in manuscripts of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. Some manuscripts provide a Latin translation, while others give a Latin translation and an Old English version. The different Old English versions use various regional dialects, including Northumbrian and West Saxon. One of the manuscripts containing the West Saxon version of this very precious literary fragment is British Library Cotton MS Otho B XI. The manuscript was unfortunately also damaged in the fire of 1731, but an early modern transcript of it survives (British Library Additional MS 43703). In *Old and Middle English c. 890-c.1450*, Elaine Treharne translates Caedmon's hymn into modern English as:

'Now we ought to praise the Guardian of the heavenly kingdom,

The might of the Creator and his conception,

The work of the glorious Father, as he of each of the wonders,

Eternal Lord, established the beginning.

He first created for the sons of men [children of earth in West Saxon version]

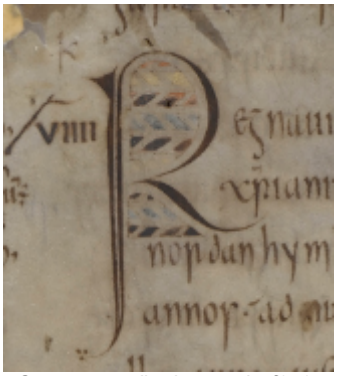
Heaven as a roof, holy Creator;

Then the middle-earth, the Guardian of mankind,

The eternal Lord, afterwards made

The earth for men, the Lord almighty.'

The hymn is a work in praise of God. It grabs the reader from its opening word 'Nu', meaning 'Now', making the poem feel immediate. From there it proceeds to celebrate all of creation in a mere nine lines. Like all Old English verse, it uses musical alliteration. It closes, powerfully, with the word 'allmectig', 'Almighty', in praise of God.



Cotton_ms_tiberius_a_xiv_f079v

Detail of an initial from Bede, Ecclesiastical History of the English People, England (Wearmouth-Jarrow?), mid-8th-early 9th century, Cotton Tiberius A XIV, ff. 79v

Bede's point, in his story about Caedmon, is that poetry is transformational, mystical and god-given. For, according to Bede, 'no other English poets could compare' with Caedmon, the humble late-comer not trained by human teachers, whose poetry in turn transformed and inspired those who read it in the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond.

~ Mary Wellesley and Alison Hudson

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The Eilean Mor Lighthouse Mystery

historic-uk.com

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By Ben Johnson



On the 26th December 1900, a small ship was making its way to the Flannan Islands in the remote Outer Hebridies. Its destination was the lighthouse at Eilean Mor, a remote island which (apart from its lighthouse keepers) was completely uninhabited.

Although uninhabited, the island has always sparked people's interest. It is named after St. Flannen, a 6th century Irish Bishop who later became a saint. He built a chapel on the island and for centuries shepherds used to bring over sheep to the island to graze but would never stay the night, fearful of the spirits believed to haunt that remote spot.

Captain James Harvey was in charge of the ship which was also carrying Jospeph Moore, a replacement lifehouse keeper. As the ship reached the landing platform, Captain Harvey was surprised not to see anyone waiting for their arrival. He blew his horn and sent up a warning flare to attract attention.

There was no response.

Joseph Moore then rowed ashore and ascended up the steep set of stairs that leaded up to the lighthouse. According to reports from Moore himself, the replacement lighthouse keeper suffered an overwhelming sense of foreboding on his long walk up to the top of the cliff.



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The island of Eilean Mor, with the lighthouse in the background. Attribution: Marc Calhoun under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.

Once at the lighthouse, Moore noticed something was immediately wrong; the door to the lighthouse was unlocked and in the entrance hall two of the three oil skinned coats were missing. Moore continued onto the kitchen area where he found half eaten food and an overturned chair, almost as if someone had jumped from their seat in a hurry. To add to this peculiar scene, the kitchen clock had also stopped.

Moore continued to search the rest of the lighthouse but found no sign of the lighthouse keepers. He ran back to the ship to inform Captain Harvey, who subsequently ordered a search of the islands for the missing men. No-one was found.

Harvey quickly sent back a telegram to the mainland, which in turn was forwarded to the Northern Lighthouse Board Headquarters in Edinburgh. The telegraph read:

A dreadful accident has happened at Flannans. The three Keepers, Ducat, Marshall and the occasional have disappeared from the island. On our arrival there this afternoon no sign of life was to be seen on the Island.

Fired a rocket but, as no response was made, managed to land Moore, who went up to the Station but found no Keepers there. The clocks were stopped and other signs indicated that the accident must have happened about a week ago. Poor fellows they must been blown over the cliffs or drowned trying to secure a crane or something like that.

Night coming on, we could not wait to make something as to their fate.
I have left Moore, MacDonald, Buoymaster and two Seamen on the island to keep the light burning until you

make other arrangements. Will not return to Oban until I hear from you. I have repeated this wire to Muirhead in case you are not at home. I will remain at the telegraph office tonight until it closes, if you wish to wire me.

A few days later, Robert Muirhead, the board's supernatant who both recruited and knew all three men personally, departed for the island to investigate the disappearances.

His investigation of the lighthouse found nothing over and above what Moore had already reported. That is, except for the lighthouse's log…

Muirhead immediately noticed that the last few days of entries were unusual. On the 12th December, Thomas Marshall, the second assistant, wrote of 'severe winds the likes of which I have never seen before in twenty years'. He also noticed that James Ducat, the Principal Keeper, had been 'very quiet' and that the third assistant, William McArthur, had been crying.

What is strange about the final remark was that William McArthur was a seasoned mariner, and was known on the Scottish mainland as a tough brawler. Why would he be crying about a storm?

Log entries on the 13th December stated that the storm was still raging, and that all three men had been praying. But why would three experienced lighthouse keepers, safely situated on a brand new lighthouse that was 150 feet above sea level, be praying for a storm to stop? They should have been perfectly safe.

Even more peculiar is that there were no reported storms in the area on the 12th, 13th and 14th of December. In fact, the weather was calm, and the storms that were to batter the island didn't hit until December 17th.

The final log entry was made on the 15th December. It simply read 'Storm ended, sea calm. God is over all'. What was meant by 'God is over all'?

After reading the logs, Muirhead's attention turned to the remaining oil skinned coat that had been left in the entrance hall. Why, in the bitter cold winter, had one of the lighthouse keepers ventured out without his coat? Furthermore, why had all three lighthouse staff left their posts at the same time, when rules and regulations strictly prohibited it?

Further clues were found down by the landing platform. Here Muirhead noticed ropes strewn all over the rocks, ropes which were usually held in a brown crate 70 feet above the platform on a supply crane. Perhaps the crate had been dislodged and knocked down, and the lighthouse keepers were attempting to retrieve them when an unexpected wave came and washed them out to sea? This was the first and most likely theory, and as such Muirhead included it in his official report to the Northern Lighthouse Board.



The landing platform at Eilean Mor

The landing platform at Eilean Mor

But this explanation left some people in the Northern Lighthouse Board unconvinced. For one, why had none of the bodies been washed ashore? Why had one of the men left the lighthouse without taking his coat, especially since this was December in the Outer Hebridies? Why had three experienced lighthouse keepers been taken unaware by a wave?

Although these were all good questions, the most pertinent and persistent question was around the weather conditions at the time; the seas should have been calm! They were sure of this as the lighthouse could be seen from the nearby Isle of Lewis, and any bad weather would have obscured it from view.

Over the following decades, subsequent lighthouse keepers at Eilean Mor have reported strange voices in the wind, calling out the names of the three dead men. Theories about their disappearance have ranged from

foreign invaders capturing the men, all the way through to alien abductions! Whatever the reason for their disappearance, something (or someone) snatched those three men from the rock of Eilean Mor on that winter's day over 100 years ago.

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The man stuffed and displayed like a wild animal - BBC News

bbc.com

http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37344210



An 1888 engraving of El Betchuanas

In the early 19th Century, it was fashionable for Europeans to collect wild animals from around the globe, bring them home and put them on display. One French dealer went further, bringing back the body of an African warrior. Dutch writer Frank Westerman came across the exhibit in a Spanish museum 30 years ago, and was determined to trace the man's history.

WARNING: This story contains an image some readers may find disturbing

A decorative chain-link fence in the national colours - blue, white and black - marks the grave of one of the most famous, but least enviable sons of Botswana: "El Negro". His resting place in a public park in the city of Gaborone, under a tree trunk and some rocks, is reminiscent of the tomb of an unknown soldier.

A metal plaque reads:

El Negro

Died c. 1830

Son of Africa

Carried to Europe in Death

Returned Home to African Soil

October 2000

His fame comes from his posthumous travels - lasting 170 years - as a museum exhibit in France and Spain. Generations of Europeans gaped at his half-naked body, which had been stuffed and mounted by a taxidermist. There he stood, nameless, exhibited like a trophy.

Back in 1983, as a university student from The Netherlands, I accidentally came across him on a hitchhiking trip to Spain. I had spent a night in the town of Banyoles, an hour north of Barcelona. The entrance of the Darder Museum of Natural History, behind a trio of leafless plane trees, happened to be next door.

Image copyright Google

"He's real, you know," a schoolgirl shouted at me.



El Negro's final resting place



Museu Darder

"Who's real?"

"El Negro!" Her voice blared out over the square - accompanied by the snorts and laughter of her friends.

History dictated that the taxidermist was a white European and his object a black African - the reverse was unimaginable

The next instant an elderly woman stepped out of the hairdressing salon with a cardigan draped over her shoulders. A fragile lady with a pointy chin graced by a few single hairs, she turned a key ring around in her fingers like a rosary. Senora Lola opened up the museum, sold me a ticket and pointed in the direction of the reptile room.

"That way," she ordered. "Then go through the rooms clockwise."

As I was on my way to the Human Room, an annex of the Mammal Room, past a climbing wall with apes and the skeleton of a gorilla, my merriment gave way to a shudder. There he was, the stuffed Negro of Banyoles. A spear in his right hand, a shield in his left. Bending slightly, shoulders raised. Half-naked, with just a raffia decoration and a coarse orange loincloth.

El Negro turned out to be an adult male, skin and bones, who hardly came up to one's elbow. He was standing in a glass case in the middle of the carpet.

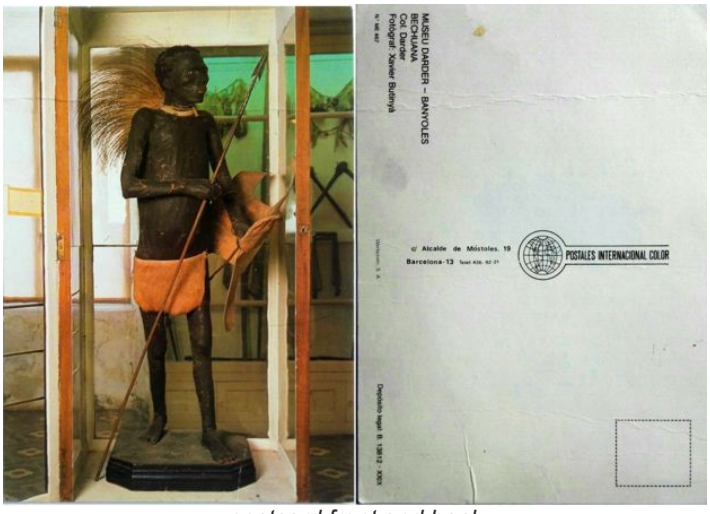
This was not Madame Tussaud's. I was not staring at an illusion of authenticity - this black man was neither a cast nor some kind of mummy. He was a human being, displayed like yet another wildlife specimen. History dictated that the taxidermist was a white European and his object a black African. The reverse was unimaginable. I flushed and felt the roots of my hair prickling - simply from a diffuse sense of shame.

Senora Lola didn't have an explanation. She didn't even have a catalogue or a brochure. She tapped a carousel postcard stand and stared at me through her glasses. I took a card of El Negro and read on the back: Museo Darder - Banyoles. Bechuana.

"Bechuana?"

Senora Lola kept staring at me. Head back, chin jutting forward. "The cards are 40 pesetas each," she said.

I bought two.



postcard front and back

Twenty years later I decided to write a book about El Negro's extraordinary journey from Botswana (Bechuana) to Banyoles and back again.

The story begins with Jules Verreaux, a French dealer in "naturalia", who in 1831 witnessed the burial of a Tswana warrior in the African interior, a few days' travel north of Capetown, and then returned at night - "not without danger to my own life" - to dig up the body and steal the skin, the skull and a few bones.

With the help of metal wire acting as a spine, wooden boards as shoulder blades, and stuffed with newspapers, Verreaux prepared and preserved the stolen body parts. Then he shipped him to Paris, along with a batch of stuffed animals in crates. In 1831 the African's body appeared in a showroom at No 3, Rue Saint Fiacre.

In a review, the newspaper Le Constitutionnel praised the fearlessness of Jules Verreaux, who must have faced dangers "amid natives who are as wild as they are black". This article set the tone, and the "individual of the Bechuana people" attracted more attention than the giraffes, hyenas or ostriches. "He is small in posture, black-skinned, and his head is covered in woolly frizzy hair," the newspaper said.

More than half a century later, the "Bechuana" popped up in Spain. On the fringes of the world exhibition in Barcelona in 1888, the Spanish vet Francisco Darder presented him in a catalogue as "El Betchuanas", complete with a drawing in which he is seen wearing raffia finery and holding a spear and a shield.


El Betchuanas
An 1888 engraving of El Betchuanas

By the 20th Century, having been brought over to Banyoles, a small city at the foot of the Pyrenees, his origins had been largely forgotten - on his pedestal was mistakenly written "Bushman of the Kalahari". In the decades that followed, the link to his Tswana origins faded even further and he became known simply as "El Negro".

At some point, the revealing loincloth that Jules Verreaux had decked him out in was replaced by the Roman-Catholic curators of the Banyoles museum with a more demure orange skirt. His skin was given a layer of shoe polish to make him seem blacker than he was.

Standing in his display case, slightly bowed and with a piercing gaze, El Negro embodied in a poignant and harrowing way, the darkest aspects of Europe's colonial past. He confronted visitors head-on with theories of "scientific racism" - the classification of people according to their supposed inferiority or superiority on the basis of skull measurements and other false assumptions.

> El Negro was dismantled as if the film of the preparations that Jules Verreaux carried out 170 years earlier was simply rewound

As the 20th Century progressed, El Negro became more and more of an anachronism. Not only was there increasing guilt and awareness of the fact that his body and grave had been violated, but as a European artefact from the 19th Century he reflected ideas that had become universally untenable.

Everything began to shift in 1992 when a Spanish doctor of Haitian origin suggested, in a letter to El Pais, that El Negro should be removed from the museum. The Olympic Games were coming to Barcelona that year and the lake of Banyoles was the venue for the rowing competitions. Surely, wrote Dr Alphonse Arcelin, any athletes and spectators who visited the local museum would take offence at the sight of a stuffed black man.

Arcelin's call was supported by prominent names such as the US pastor Jesse Jackson and basketball player "Magic" Johnson. The Ghanaian Kofi Annan, then still Assistant Secretary-General of the UN, condemned the exhibit as "repulsive" and "barbarically insensitive".

But due to heavy resistance among the Catalan people, who embraced El Negro as a "national" treasure, it was not until March 1997 that El Negro disappeared from public view and "Object 1004" was put into storage. Three years later, in the autumn of 2000, he began his final journey home.

Following long consultations with the Organisation for African Unity, Spain had agreed to repatriate the human remains to Botswana for a ceremonial reburial in African soil. The first stage of his repatriation was a night ride in a truck to Madrid.

Once in the capital, his stuffed body was divested of its non-human additions, such as his glass eyes. El Negro was dismantled - as if the film of the preparations that Jules Verreaux carried out 170 years earlier was simply rewound.

His skin, however, turned out to be hard and crusty - it crumbled. Because of this, and because of the treatment with shoe polish, it was decided to keep it in Spain. According to one newspaper report it was left behind at the Museum of Anthropology in Madrid.

So the coffin, destined for Botswana, contained only the skull and certain arm and leg bones.

The remains of the Tswana warrior lay in state for a day in the capital Gaborone, where an estimated 10,000 people walked past to pay their last respects. The following day, 5 October 2000, he was committed to earth in a fenced-off area in the Tsholofelo park.

In 2016 it is still not known who this "son of Africa" was

It was a Christian burial. "In the spirit of Jesus Christ," the priest said with his hand on the Bible, "who also suffered." An awning, supported by two rows of tent poles, protected the guests of honour from the sun.

"We are prepared to forgive," said the then-Foreign Minister Mompati Merafhe to the assembled mourners. "But we must not forget the crimes of the past, so that we don't repeat them."

Blessings were pronounced, there was singing and dancing. Buglers wearing white gloves sounded a last salute.

Subsequently, the grave was neglected for many years, the field around it being used as a football pitch. Lately however, the Botswanan government has restored and enhanced the site with a visitor's centre and explanatory signs.

But in 2016 it is still not known who this "son of Africa" was, what his name was, or exactly where he came from.

An autopsy, carried out in a Catalan hospital in 1995, nevertheless brought some things to light. The man who became world-renowned as El Negro lived to be about 27 years old. When alive, he stood between 1.35m and 1.4m tall (between 4ft 5in and 4ft 7in). He probably died of pneumonia.

- Frank Westerman is the author of the book "El Negro and me".

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Elaborate Bronze Memorial Dedicated to Staten Island Ferry Octopus Attack Tricks Tourists

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Elaborate Bronze Memorial Dedicated to Staten Island Ferry Octopus Attack Tricks Touristsby Kate Sierzputowski on September 26, 2016



octo-4

Monuments and vaguely descriptive plaques are commonplace around cities and heavily trafficked tourist areas, giving just enough insight into an historic event or landmark. The Staten Island Ferry Disaster Memorial blends in with these weathered monuments, except for the fact that all details on the work are completely false. The monument, which is located in Battery Park, Manhattan, was created by artist Joe Reginella and honors the 400 victims who perished during a giant octopus attack of a Staten Island ferry named the Cornelius G. Kolff on November 22, 1963, the same day as the assassination of JFK.

The elaborate hoax was six months in the making, and is also seen by Reginella as a multimedia art project and social experiment. The website, and fliers distributed around Manhattan by his team, give a false location for a museum, ironically a place you must get to by ferry. You can see more tourist reactions and find real information about the fake event on the Staten Island Ferry Octopus Disaster Memorial Museum's Facebook. (via Hi-Fructose)



octo-1



octo-2

See related posts on Colossal about humor, New York, octopi, public art, street art.



octo-3

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Attacked by runaway goat

stuff.co.nz

stuff Last updated 18:02, November 11 2016



Phil Hearne The wild goat left the man with cuts and abrasions.

An Australian man in his 70s has been taken to hospital after an hour-long "struggle" with a goat.

Paramedics were called to a rural property in the Gold Coast after reports the man had been attacked and was in a "struggle" with a goat for about an hour at 5.30am.

The man suffered grazes, abrasions and dehydration and was transported to Gold Coast Robina Hospital.

Paramedics found the man at the Tallai property on Friday morning while police were forced to step in to wrangle and bind the runaway goat.

Police were forced to step in to wrangle and bind the animal, which they believed to be a wild mountain goat, and handed it to Gold Coast city council workers.

A council spokesperson said they were investigating the incident.

An idea 12 years in the making becomes a reality

Are you my mother?

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Eligos/Abigor

By admin



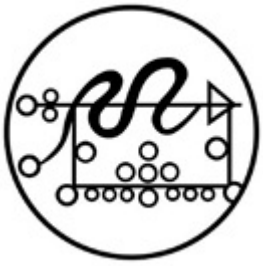
Abigor - Dictionnaire Infernal

Dictionnaire Infernal – Collin de Plancy (1863) (paraphrased)
Abigor presents himself as a horseman carrying a lance, a standard, or a scepter. He commands sixty legions & is a grand duke of hell. He knows of the secrets of warfare, of the future, and can instruct leaders of the ways to earn their soldiers' respect.

Pseudomonarchia daemonum – Johann Wier (1583)

Eligor, alias Abigor, is a great duke, and appeereth as a goodlie [handsome] knight, carrieng a lance, an ensigne, and a scepter: he answereth fullie of things hidden, and of warres, and how souldiers should meete: he knoweth things to come, and procureth the favour of lords and knights, governing sixtie legions of divels.

Goetia – S. L. MacGregor Mathers (1904)



Eligos' Goetic seal

The Fifteenth Spirit in Order is Eligos, a Great Duke, and appeareth in the form of a goodly Knight, carrying a Lance, an Ensign, and a Serpent. He discovereth hiddenthings, and knoweth things to come; and of Wars, and how the Soldiers will or shall meet. He causeth the Love of Lords and Great Persons. He governeth 60 Legions of Spirits. His Seal is this, etc.

Reference

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- Book: Discoverie of Witchcraft
- Web: The Goetia – the Lesser Key of Solomon (from sacred-texts.com)
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About Deliriumsrealm

DeliriumsRealm is devoted to the study of good and evil in society; specifically, what is the nature of evil and how has evil been defined and personified throughout history. The site offers an extensive

database of demon names and profiles as well as articles on demonology, biblical studies, the afterlife and end times and witchcraft. Our most popular demon profiles include Satan, Lucifer, Azazel, Fallen Angels, and the Watchers and Nephilim from the Book of Enoch.

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Mythbusting Ancient Rome: What was Emperor Nero really like?

thelocal.it

20 October 2016
10:19 CEST+02:00



20 October 2016
10:19 CEST+02:00

As a new rock musical sets out to tell the story of controversial emperor Nero's life, who exactly was the man who legend says played the fiddle while Rome burned? Caillan Davenport and Shushma Malik from the University of Queensland explore the facts and the fiction.

If asked to think of a single individual who epitomizes the decadence, destruction and debauchery of Ancient Rome, the name Nero would surely be on many people's lips.

Attaining power in A.D. 54 at the tender age of 16, over the next 14 years Nero allegedly murdered his two wives, his mother, and his aunt while also marrying two different men and sleeping with his mother and a Vestal Virgin.

As if these sexcapades and murders weren't enough to keep the youthful emperor busy, he is also supposed to have set fire to Rome, played (or fiddled) while the city burned, and then blamed the Christians in order to deflect attention from himself. The image of the capricious and crazed Nero is immortalised in films and TV series such as Quo Vadis and I, Claudius, not to mention in the computer software Nero Burning ROM.



Nero by Abraham Janssens van Nuyssen (1620)

Wikimedia Commons

But are any of these stories that feed our popular conception of the emperor Nero actually true? We'd like to tackle two of the most pervasive misunderstandings about Nero's reign – that he was responsible for setting fire to Rome and that he had a sexual relationship with his mother, Agrippina the Younger.

These tales can be found in our ancient historical sources (all of which were written at least a generation after Nero's death) but should not be taken at face value. This is because they are reported by sources as rumours, rather than facts.

Did Nero set fire to Rome?

Nero had a reputation as an arsonist even in antiquity, with rumours that he started the Fire of Rome in A.D. 64 appearing in the histories of Tacitus and Cassius Dio and the biography of Nero by

Suetonius. While most scholars now agree that Nero was not responsible for the fire, the modern-day rumour mill (as represented by the Internet) is loath to exonerate the emperor.

There are two reasons usually given for why Nero set fire to Rome. The first is that he was a mad megalomaniac who burned down the city simply because he could. There is a story told by Suetonius that when a man said to Nero, 'When I am dead, let the earth be consumed by fire', the emperor replied, 'No, while I live!'

The second reason often proffered is that Nero wanted to rebuild Rome according to his own plans, which included a sumptuous new residence for himself, the "Golden House" (*Domus Aurea*). There is a modern myth that the new palace was built solely for parties and orgies.



Google Art Project/Wikimedia

The Fire of Rome by Hubert Robert (1785)

If we examine our historical accounts closely, the only evidence for Nero the arsonist comes from rumour and hearsay. This is freely admitted by the historian Tacitus: even though Nero was out of Rome when the fire started, a rumour spread that the emperor had sung of the destruction of Troy from his palace stage.

Cassius Dio describes chaos in the streets as the fire took hold, as people ran about asking each other how the blaze started. In such a desperate situation, without reliable channels of information, it is easy to see how rumours could start.

Did Nero commit incest with his mother?

Nero has not only earned an undeserved reputation as an arsonist, but also as an incestuous deviant. His alleged sexual antics with his mother Agrippina have earned him a place on a list of the "most sexually depraved things Romans ever did" and in news stories about his "pleasure palace". As with the story of the Fire of Rome, this image of Nero derives solely from ancient rumours, not from facts.



Wikimedia Commons

Agrippina the Younger from Stuttgart

The Roman people loved to speculate about the emperors and their sex lives. One story involves Nero and his mother being carried through Rome in a litter (a portable couch concealed by curtains), only for the emperor to emerge with suspicious stains on his clothes. People started to whisper that the pair had been doing more than reviewing imperial legislation behind the curtains.

Even more scandalous was the fact that the emperor took a mistress who turned out to be the spitting image of his mother – a situation which got tongues wagging throughout Rome.

These rumours can be explained as responses to an unusual political situation. Nero was only 16 when he was acclaimed emperor, and his mother Agrippina asserted herself as the emperor's guardian by appointing men loyal to her in key positions. Her extraordinary influence is demonstrated by contemporary coins with busts of both the emperor and his mother on the "heads" side. This coin made Agrippina look like she was Nero's equal.

Agrippina's unprecedented position was the subject of continual speculation throughout the city of Rome, according to Cassius Dio, because the people could not obtain accurate information about affairs inside the palace. Without reliable information, rumours spread based on cultural preconceptions: in the Roman world, it was believed that a woman could not exert political power unless it was gained by underhanded or immoral means.

One particularly pervasive rumour developed after Agrippina began to lose influence over Nero, as he began to pay more attention to his comely courtier Poppaea Sabina. Agrippina allegedly dressed herself up to the nines and propositioned her son as he lay in a drunken stupor after a long liquid lunch.

Cassius Dio remarked: "Whether this actually occurred, now, or whether it was invented to fit their character, I am not sure."

The fact that our ancient historians do not believe such tales should give us pause.

The purpose of rumour

Sociological studies of rumours have shown that they develop in situations when people do not have good information to explain current events. The rumour that Nero started the fire of Rome can be explained as an attempt by people to make sense of a confused, traumatic situation during which little or no official information about what actually happened was available.

The sight of the *Domus Aurea* being built so soon after the fire undoubtedly fanned the flames of rumour, pointing the finger at the emperor himself. The same point can be made about Nero's alleged incestuous relationship with his mother. The stories about the sexual relationship developed as a way of explaining both Agrippina's extraordinary power and prominence as well as her fall from favour.

Our ancient sources are clear about the fact that they are reporting rumours and innuendo. Suetonius, the biographer of Nero, reports that the emperor was merely *thought* to have desired his mother, but was persuaded not to act on his feelings. Similarly Tacitus reveals that, while some *believed* in the *rumour* that Nero started the fire, there were also those who did not.

If our ancient authors knew these stories were just rumours, why did they record them? There are various reasons for this. There was certainly a tradition in ancient historiography of reporting different versions of events and allowing the reader to make up their own minds. The stories are also very entertaining: we should never forget that these histories and biographies were designed to bring pleasure to their readers.

Finally, the salacious rumours served a political purpose. An emperor's sex life was not simply juicy gossip for the masses: his private peccadilloes were believed to reflect the character of his government. Rumours, even if ultimately untrue, helped to define the expectations of a good emperor in the minds of the readers.

Slightly different motivations underlie the circulation of these rumours about Nero as facts in the modern world. They are enjoyable and entertaining to read, appealing to our cultural preconceptions of ancient Rome and its emperors as corrupt and morally bankrupt.

But perhaps most significantly, they enable us to impose a moral distance between ourselves and our ancient forebears. Making the past seem strange and unfamiliar helps to forget that the same problems still exist in the present.

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This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article.

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Emu Found Wandering Along Phoenix Interstate

Published at 9:28 PM EDT on Oct 21, 2016 | Updated at 9:30 PM EDT on Oct 21, 2016

nbcmiami.com

State troopers say an emu crossed a Phoenix road, got to the other side and narrowly avoided getting hurt.

Arizona Department of Public Safety spokesman Quentin Mehr says the agency received reports Friday around 10 a.m. that an emu was on the loose on Interstate 10.

According to Mehr, a responding trooper found the bird in the median.

The emu then crossed the interstate and ended up on the dirt shoulder.

Mehr says a second trooper showed up and both officers drove alongside the animal to keep it from entering traffic lanes.

An officer from the Arizona Department of Agriculture arrived and used a lasso to wrangle the emu into a trailer.

Authorities say it is still unclear how the emu came into the area.

It isn't the first rare animal to get loose in the Phoenix area. Last year, two speedy llamas that escaped a local retirement community led authorities on a long, mesmerizing chase, briefly bringing the internet to a screeching halt as people watched the drama unfold in real time.

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The Secret Joy of Baseball Curses

Chimamanda Adichie

theatlantic.com

The Chicago Cubs are world champions—and the billy goat has gone the way of the Bambino.



For generations, the Chicago Cubs and the Boston Red Sox were twins in misery. Here were two of the most beloved teams in the league, both steeped in baseball folklore, both suffering epic championship droughts. We're talking losing streaks so bad that they could only be explained by dark, supernatural forces.

The tales of those forces, like the pain of the losses they apparently perpetrated, were handed down from one generation to the next, woven into the identity of fandom. This is how curses become almost sacred, something to be cherished as much as despised. From 1918 to 2004, Boston endured the curse of the Bambino, a hex on the franchise that began with the loss of Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees and lasted 86 long years, until the Sox finally won the World Series.

The Chicago Cubs and the New Baseball

But the Cubs suffered even longer. The team's World Series win Wednesday night marks its first championship in 108 years, a dry spell that's often been blamed on the Curse of the Billy Goat. (To cut a long story short: A pub owner who was made to leave Wrigley Field during a World Series game in 1945, on account of the smelly pet goat he had with him, declared a curse on the team as a result.)

For those who doubt the ruthlessness of the baseball gods, consider the Bill Buckner tragedy of 1986, one of the most infamous moments in postseason history—and an incident that represents an overlap in the two team's curses. Buckner, who had previously played for the Cubs, was blamed for throwing away the Red Sox's chance at winning the World Series when he let a ball roll through his legs at first base, enabling the New York Mets to score a winning run.*

An error so grave, at a moment so key, had to be evidence of the curse on Boston. But there's a twist: Buckner was wearing his old Cubs batting glove under his mitt when he screwed up. "No wonder Buckner missed that ball," Paul Lukas wrote in an essay for ESPN. "He never had a chance."

And that's the thing about curses. They attempt to reorder people's sense of destiny, a carefully constructed fiction in sports fandom as it is. In reality, championships are won and lost with some combination of talent, physics, meteorology, and dumb luck. But to a fan, everything—really, *everything*—can be meaningfully connected to the outcome of a game. Wishing for a team to win isn't enough, but wearing the right shirt—or growing the right beard, or partaking in the proper pre-game ritual—sometimes is.

In the end, a fantastic baseball game, or an ominous curse, is nothing more than a great story. But a great story, told the right way, can be everything.

And when that's still not enough? It must be a curse. What else could explain the crush of defeat against all hope? A curse is more powerful than any player's abilities, bigger than the team, greater even than the fandom. Which means a curse narrative runs counter to so much of how people otherwise engage in sports fandoms, in which individual control—or the illusion of it—is seen as paramount.

Contradictory though it may seem, this is all part of "a beloved, time-honored game steeped in nostalgia," Mickey Bradley and Dan Gordon wrote in their book, *Haunted Baseball.* "[Curse stories] provide a lens through which to view a team's past—usually a heartbreaking past—that connects disappointment to tradition and legacy."

By their very nature, curse stories transcend a single championship or season. This speak's to baseball's deepest cultural value, and the way a person's love of it is shared—often quite intimately—with the people they love most.

If baseball can be poetry, and it can, then why shouldn't it be subject to the narrative rules of epic literature? Belief in a curse speaks to something deeper about the game. It has the power to elevate a team's history, and a fan's devotion, to an art form. Mourning yet another loss, inheriting lifetimes of disappointment, and rooting for the team anyway—this isn't just a form of obsession or blind optimism. It's an act of devotion.

In the end, a fantastic baseball game, or an ominous curse, is nothing more than a great story. But a great story, told the right way, can be everything.

** This article originally mischaracterized the timing of the Bill Buckner incident in 1986. It occurred during the World Series, not earlier in the playoffs. We regret the error.*

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Endurance Starvation Was Once a Crowd-Pleasing Sport

atlasobscura.com

While Greece and England were trying to revive the Olympics, the rest of the Western world was obsessed with hunger artists.

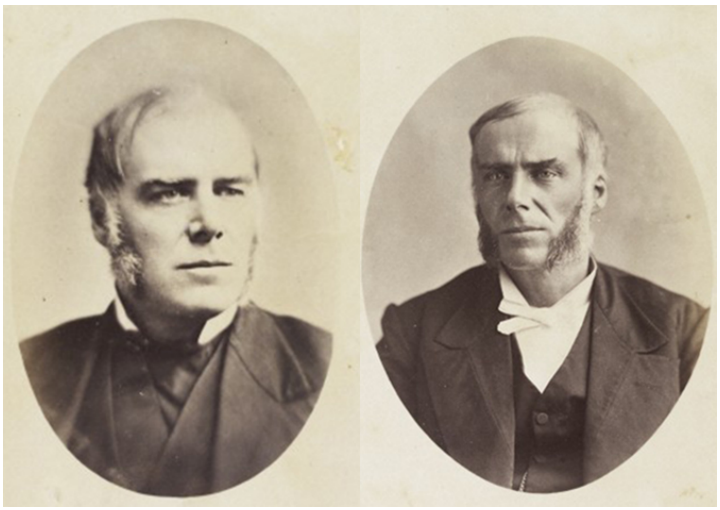
by Romie Stott
August 11, 2016



On September 5, 2003, magician David Blaine stepped into a clear acrylic box and was hoisted into position above the Thames River. There he would dangle for 44 days, in full view of passersby. He would eat nothing. He would drink only water. In the course of his ordeal, he was taunted by onlookers who hurled rotten eggs and hamburger patties at his transparent prison.

Others blew horns and beat drums to keep him awake at all hours; a radio DJ named Bam Bam exhorted listeners to shout his show's "ring-a-ding" jingle from Tower Bridge nonstop for 24 hours. Specialists looked for the hoax: surely, Blaine's water was supplemented with glucose or thiamin and other nutrients. Maybe he had a double. Maybe he was a hologram. Even after Blaine emerged from the box, thin and shaking, doubts remained.

Hunger artists were once a type of sideshow performer as well-known as sword swallowers, horse divers, and snake charmers. By the late 1800s, they were prevalent enough to inspire category splitting along the lines of mods-versus-rockers. Hunger artists weren't human skeletons—people who ate but looked like they didn't. Nor were they "fasting girls"— young women who claimed not to need food thanks to prayer or fairies—or ascetics seeking spiritual enlightenment through deprivation. Instead, they were men (almost exclusively) who went without food for weeks at a time to prove it could be done.

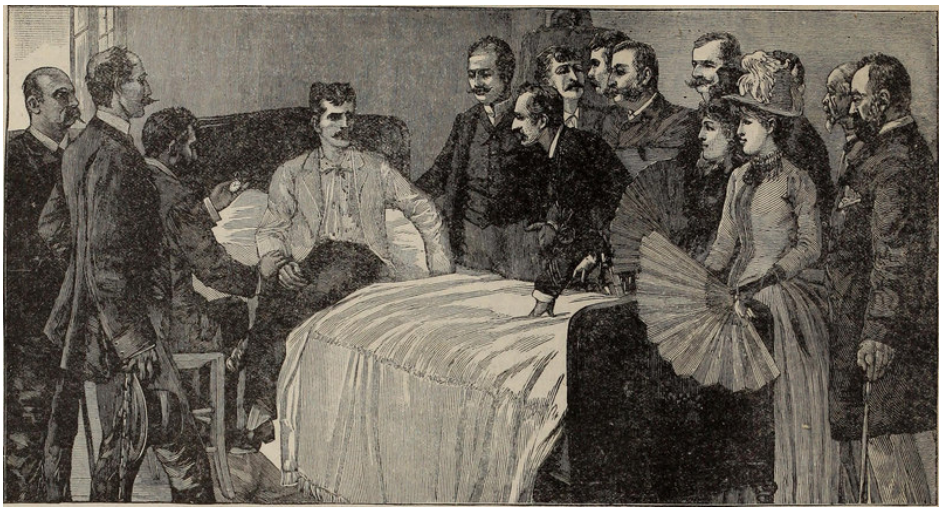


Public fasting was very much an endurance sport that demonstrated physical prowess, kind of the inverse of weight lifting. That's part of why it was thought of as a manly thing to do. It had a lot of similarities with extreme long distance running; the marathon is, after all, based on a legend in which Pheidippides collapses to the ground and dies immediately after running such a long distance.

The hunger artists' heyday coincided with the Victorian fad for mountaineering and a half dozen attempts to launch the modern Olympics; all three blossomed during an extended European and North American peacetime when newspapers were eager to fill their pages with new feats of strength and persistence, piped in through newfangled telegraph machines.

When Henry Tanner performed a 40-day fast in New York in 1880, under the supervision of the U.S. Medical College, spectators were admitted for 25 cents a ticket, the 2016 equivalent of about $6. They came in throngs, spurred by breathless newspaper coverage, to watch Tanner in his rocking chair, mopping his face with damp cloths that were sometimes inspected to ensure they didn't secretly contain soup. Those who couldn't attend sent 300 to 500 pieces of fan mail a day.

On the final day of the fast, admission was raised to 50 cents a ticket, for a box office take estimated at $2,000 ($44,000 in today's dollars); Tanner also received a $1,000 reward from William Hammond, a former U.S. Surgeon General convinced that surviving more than 30 days without food was impossible. After his 40-day fast, Tanner went on to opena successful health clinic in southern California, where he mentored other fasters pursuing both medical and performative excellence.



Tanner wasn't even the highest achiever in the field. That honor belonged to Italian superstar Giovanni Succi, probably the most direct inspiration for Franz Kafka's short story "A Hunger Artist," which many modern readers presume to be an allegory along the same lines as the cockroach in *The Metamorphosis*. But Succi was perhaps even stranger than his fictional counterpart: His fasting career began at the age of 32, and included more than 30 public fasts in the space of 20 years—five of them in 1888 alone.

Although today Succi is better remembered for his collaborations with physiologist Luigi Luciani, which established a lot of what we know about the physiology of starvation and its effects on the central nervous system, his contemporaries viewed him as more of a wildly eccentric pop star. Succi's most rational explanation for his obsession with fasting was that he'd suffered from liver disease which had made him temporarily unable to eat, and had been fascinated to discover how long he could go without food. However, he also sometimes claimed to have the spirit of a reincarnated lion and access to magical potions. He was committed to two mental institutions, but given the public appetite for starvation art, it was hard to claim there was anything wrong with him. He was released without diagnosis.

He drew crowds across Europe and America, who he regaled with stories of his days as a commercial trader and traveler in Africa—a way to pass the time during increasingly lengthy fasts: first 30 days, then 50, then 66 days long. To further demonstrate his vivacity, he added horseback rides, gymnastic exercises, and fencing bouts mid-fast. In 1907, when the first cinema in Bologna opened its doors, Succi was there in the lobby, fasting in a glass cage, his entertainment value a surer thing than newfangled moving pictures.



SUFFRAGETTE STARVES HERSELF OUT OF JAIL

LONDON, July 9.—The latest heroine of the suffragette cause is Miss Walace Dunlop, who recently was sentenced to a month's imprisonment in Holloway jail for posting notices on the walls of the house of parliament. Miss Dunlop organized a hunger strike in the prison and the authorities discharged her this afternoon after she had refused food for ninety-one hours.

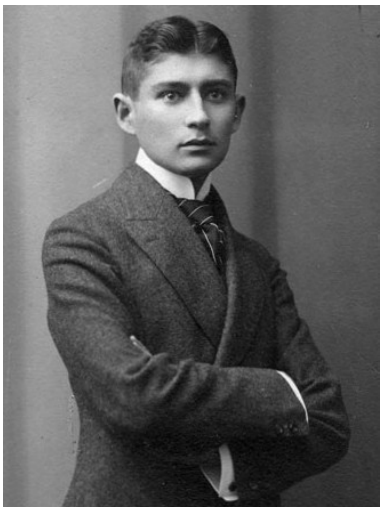
Miss Dunlop had been in prison only five days.

Public interest in hunger artists tapered off once the 20th century got underway. As with any multi-decade fad, it's hard to point to a single terminating factor, but it's probably not a coincidence that in 1909, imprisoned British suffragette Marion Wallace Dunlop went on hunger strike. This tool of political protest was quickly adopted by other suffragettes in both Britain and the United States, to the outrage of both governments, and spread to Irish Republicans.

In the face of these widely-reported battles against political repression and force-feeding, not to mention anti-imperialist protest fasts by Mohandas Gandhi and other Indian revolutionaries throughout the 1920s and '30s, it was hard to view aimless displays of extended starvation as light amusements. (Indeed, when David Blaine embarked on his 2003 stunt, he was criticized for his insensitivity to the families of Irish hunger strikers.)

By the 1920s, the remaining hunger artists were less like sideshow performers and more of a footnote to a record-setting mania that included flagpole sitters and dance marathons. In 1926, a German who billed himself as "Herr Jolly" made $35,000 from 300,000 observers as he completed a "record-breaking" 44-day fast in a traditional glass cage, but successors like Signor Venteg and the fasting double act Fastello and Harry barely

broke even. A new Succi-surprassing record was eventually set by another German, "Heros the Hungerer" (real name: Willy Schmitz), an ordinary looking middle-aged man in a skinny tie and button-down shirt, who spent 78 days without food in 1953.



Although Guinness refuses to track the world record for performative fasting, there's been a small competitive resurgence since 2003, as Chinese and Russian challengers have surpassed David Blaine's 44-day starvation stunt "record," seemingly unaware of the higher 78-day bar set by Schmitz. As Kafka says of the diminishing commercial success of his fictional *hungerkünstler*, "we live in a different world now." But if it's harder now to accrue wealth and fame as a starvation professional, it's not because the public lost interest; it's because there's too much competition.

Today, we can watch the modern variation of stunt fasting through the glass boxes in our living rooms, thanks to shows like *The Biggest Loser* and *Celebrity Fit Club*. While we engage in a centuries-old debate over whether it's healthy, whether it's fake, and how high the numbers on our personal fitness-tracker wristbands might go, perhaps we can take inspiration from another Kafka quote, from "Investigations of a Dog": "So long as you have food in your mouth, you have solved all questions for the time being."

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The Real-Life WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S! Did Errol Flynn Steal John Barrymore's Corpse To Party With It?

blumhouse.com

Blumhouse.com



barrymore-header-dr-_jekyll_and_mr-_hyde_1920

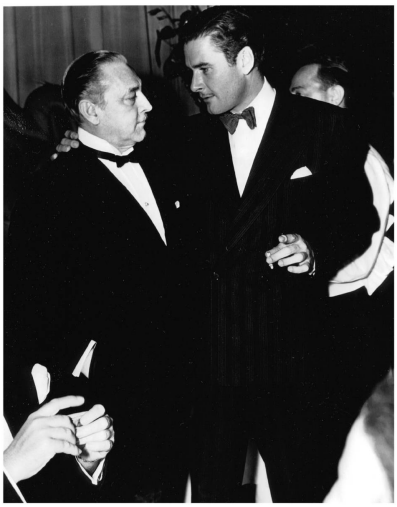
Dick Siegel

October 10, 2016

It's one of the oddest and creepiest tales to emerge from the decadence of old Hollywood and key players in celebrity grave robbing have gone on the record to confirm the gruesome tale of a corpse partying after its time on Earth was long done.

Silent movie legend John Barrymore who starred in the 1920 version of JEKYLL & HYDE was a hard drinking boisterous prankster who survived the transition from silent to talkies. He was the eldest of a famous family of thespians including Lionel and Ethel Barrymore and his granddaughter is Drew Barrymore.

Barrymore was drinking buddies with a bunch of Tinsel Town boozers including ROBIN HOOD swashbuckling lothario Errol Flynn, W. C. Fields, and director Raoul Walsh – among other such notables. They called themselves the Bundy Drive Gang and specialized in irreverent high-brow carousing – intellectual boozehounds that delighted in pranking one another. They made Sinatra's Rat Pack seem a bunch of choirboys when it came to excessive boozing and whoring.



barrymore_flynn

One long standing account of their escapades was Flynn's involvement in the post-mortem adventures of longtime pal John Barrymore's corpse. Bereft over the death of their ringleader in all times debauched, Barrymore's pals lifted "The Great Profile" from the mortuary and took the corpse into to Flynn's house for a macabre "farewell party" which may very well have been the inspiration for the 1980s flick WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S.

In his memoir MY WICKED, WICKED WAYS, Flynn recalled the horrifying tale. When his mentor and drinking buddy Barrymore died suddenly from pneumonia and cirrhosis of the liver on May 29, 1942, Flynn was so overcome with loss and grief he dove head first into an uncontrollable bender, drowning his sorrows at LA's famed Cock and Bull Bar with THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON director Raoul Walsh.

While Flynn was still chug-a-lugging, Walsh excused himself, saying he was too upset to continue the wake and slipped out. Walsh hopped in his car and paid a quick visit to the Pierce Brothers



WALSH, RAOUL

mortuary which was where the late Barrymore lay in state. After a bankroll exchanged hands, Walsh bribed the parlor director, retrieved the departed, dumped him in the car and drove back to Flynn's mansion. Walsh awoke Fynn's groggy butler to help bring the stiff inside.

"Mr. Barrymore's drunk – so lend me a hand," he recalled, telling the groggy butler. "I think he's dead," the butler snapped.

"You've seen him like this before," Walsh insisted, "So help lend me a hand.

"All right – but he looks dead to me!'"

Walsh and the butler dragged Barrymore inside, carefully positioning the cadaver on Flynn's expansive couch – looking for all the world as if he were simply passed-out.

Walsh ordered the butler to get the SVENGALI star some coffee to sober him up. The sight of a passed out Barrymore on the couch was nothing new to Flynn's butler so off he went.

After draining the bar dry at the Cock and Bull, a highly intoxicated Flynn wobbly staggered home. At first, Flynn didn't notice anything unusual when he entered.

"He sat down in his favorite chair and was talking about something or other, when the butler came back in saying 'Here's Mr. Barrymore's coffee,'" Walsh recalled.

"And with that, Flynn saw Jack and ran out of the house screaming. He hid behind a bush in the yard, yelling, "Get him out of here! You are going to get us all of us put in San Quentin!'

"Well, I took Jack back to the funeral home and the mortician asked me where I'd taken him" Walsh recalled. "I said we went to Errol Flynn's.

"You *did*?! he said. 'Why, if I'd have known you were going to take him up there, I would have put a better suit on him!'"

Yet, according to an official Barrymore biographer, there was only one visitor to the funeral parlor, a well-known prostitute "who knelt and prayed and continued on her way in silence." Gene Fowler, a member of the Bundy Drive Gang claimed he and his son were the only ones who stood vigil with Barrymore's corpse with nary a drunken movie director nor painted lady in sight.

In Richard Schickel's 1973 documentary THE MEN WHO MADE THE MOVIES, Walsh went on the record again, confirming Errol Flynn's account of the body snatch heist and practical joke.

Sadly, for Flynn, the death of Barrymore was more than the loss of a drinking buddy. He had worshipped the legendary thespian, modeling his own career and personal lifestyle after the star. So much so Flynn played Barrymore in a boozy biopic penned by his daughter Diana appropriately titled TOO MUCH, TOO SOON – which could very well have been Flynn's epitaph as well.



too-much-too_much_too_soon-poster

Within a year of the film's release, he was dead at age 50.

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Escaped cows temporarily shut down Louisiana highway

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Oct. 12, 2016 at 12:41 PM

BATON ROUGE, La., Oct. 12 (UPI) -- A group of cows briefly shut down a Louisiana highway when they escaped from a trailer following a crash.

East Baton Rouge Sheriffs Office shared photos of the scene where police worked to secure the loose animals and remove them from the road.

The cows were set loose due to a crash between a truck and a trailer carrying the animals on Airline Highway on Tuesday morning, according to The Advocate.

The highway was shut down as the cows ran along the street until men on horses managed to round them up.

Police eventually updated the situation to report the highway had been reopened.

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Every British swear word has been officially ranked in order of offensiveness

indy100.com

Posted Saturday 1 October 2016 08:15 by Jessica Brown in news

The UK's communications regulator, Ofcom, interviewed more than 200 people across the UK on how offensive they find a vast array of rude and offensive words and insults.

People were asked their opinion on 150 words in total. These included general swear words, words linked to race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, body parts and health conditions, religious insults and sexual references, as well as certain hand gestures.

They were asked to rate words as **mild, medium, strong** or **strongest**.

And this is what Ofcom found.

For general swear words, the following words were seen as...

Mild:

- Arse
- Bloody
- Bugger
- Cow
- Crap
- Damn
- Ginger
- Git
- God
- Goddam
- Jesus Christ
- Minger
- Sod-off

Medium:

- Arsehole
- Balls
- Bint
- Bitch
- Bollocks
- Bullshit
- Feck
- Munter
- Pissed/pissed off
- Shit
- Son of a bitch
- Tits

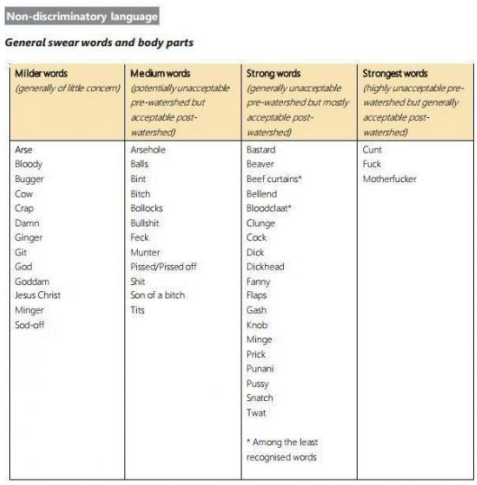
Strong:

- Bastard
- Beaver
- Beef curtains
- Bellend

- Bloodclaat
- Clunge
- Cock
- Dick
- Dickhead
- Fanny
- Flaps
- Gash
- Knob
- Minge
- Prick
- Punani
- Pussy
- Snatch
- Twat

Strongest:

- Cunt
- Fuck
- Motherfucker



Non-discriminatory language

General swear words and body parts

Milder words *(generally of little concern)*	Medium words *(potentially unacceptable pre-watershed but acceptable post-watershed)*	Strong words *(generally unacceptable pre-watershed but mostly acceptable post-watershed)*	Strongest words *(highly unacceptable pre-watershed but generally acceptable post-watershed)*
Arse	Arsehole	Bastard	Cunt
Bloody	Balls	Beaver	Fuck
Bugger	Bint	Beef curtains*	Motherfucker
Cow	Bitch	Bellend	
Crap	Bollocks	Bloodclaat*	
Damn	Bullshit	Clunge	
Ginger	Feck	Cock	
Git	Munter	Dick	
God	Pissed/Pissed off	Dickhead	
Goddam	Shit	Fanny	
Jesus Christ	Son of a bitch	Flaps	
Minger	Tits	Gash	
Sod-off		Knob	
		Minge	
		Prick	
		Punani	
		Pussy	
		Snatch	
		Twat	
		* Among the least recognised words	

swearwords.jpg

Words rated as **mild** were thought to be okay to use around children, whereas **medium** words were seen by most to be potentially unacceptable before the 9pm watershed. The vast majority thought the **strong** words should definitely be saved for after 9pm.

For sexual insults, most words were rated as **strong**.

The only words rated **mild** or **medium** were:

Bonk

Shag

Slapper

Tart

Words rated **strong** were:

Bukkake

Cocksucker

Dildo

Jizz

Ho

Nonce

Prickteaser

Rapey

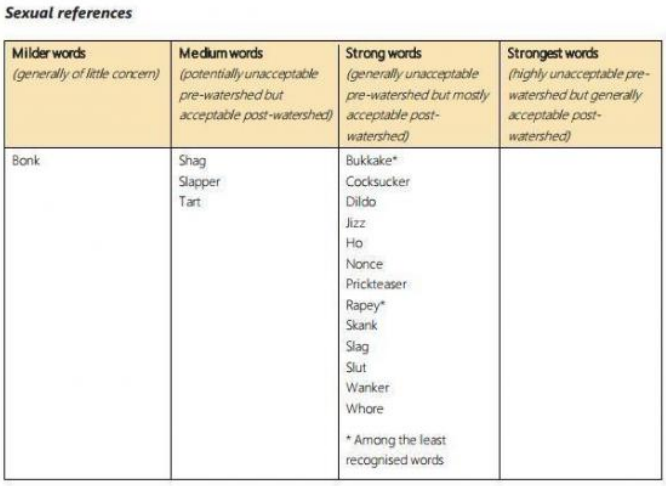
Skank

Slag

Slut

Wanker

Whore



Sexual references

Milder words *(generally of little concern)*	Medium words *(potentially unacceptable pre-watershed but acceptable post-watershed)*	Strong words *(generally unacceptable pre-watershed but mostly acceptable post-watershed)*	Strongest words *(highly unacceptable pre-watershed but generally acceptable post-watershed)*
Bonk	Shag Slapper Tart	Bukkake* Cocksucker Dildo Jizz Ho Nonce Prickteaser Rapey* Skank Slag Slut Wanker Whore * Among the least recognised words	

swearwords-2.jpg

Ofcom, which says this has been its most in-depth research yet, found that TV viewers are becoming less tolerant of racist and discriminatory language.

Most words relating to gender and sexuality, and race and ethnicity, were seen as strong, whereas most relating to disability were seen as mild or medium.

An Ofcom spokesperson told *indy100*:

The findings are from new research on people's attitudes towards potentially offensive language and gestures in broadcasting, the biggest study of its kind carried out by Ofcom.

The results are vital in supporting our broadcasting standards work to protect viewers and listeners, especially children.

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Christian fundamentalist schools 'performed exorcisms on children and beat pupils in religious rituals' - BelfastTelegraph.co.uk

Published 20/09/2016

belfasttelegraph.co.uk

Belfast Telegraph

Belfast Telegraph

Investigation reveals serious concerns about how children taught at Accelerated Christian Education in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s were treated, as ex-pupils claim exorcisms were performed on children, pupils were beaten in religious ceremonies and girls were 'groomed' for marriage to older men

Pupils were beaten in religious ceremonies and girls were 'groomed' for marriage to older men (File photo)

Teachers at Christian fundamentalist schools in the UK allegedly performed exorcisms on pupils, beat children in religious rituals and "groomed" girls for marriage, according to former students who say they have decided to speak out now after years of suffering in silence.

The former pupils told The Independent such treatment of children was a "terrifying" part of life at schools in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s in an environment where they felt too afraid to complain for fear of retribution from school staff, evangelical parents and their close-knit Baptist faith community.

One former pupil alleged that in the 1990s pupils at school assemblies would start convulsing amid "blood curdling screams" as prayers were said for the holy spirit to rid children of demons.

The alleged abuse is said to have taken place many years ago at a number of schools in the UK that follow the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum, a form of learning that originated in the southern Baptist states of the US.

The former pupils contacted The Independent after reading our June report revealing that some of these schools still teach children that girls must submit to men, homosexuality is unnatural and that creationism is a fact. They said the article jolted their memories of their own experiences.

More than 1,000 4-18 year olds are currently taught in 30 ACE schools in the UK, all of them registered as private institutions. Although the schools are bound by the same safeguarding and child protection regulations as the state sector, former pupils want assurances that monitoring of these schools is more effective than when they attended.

One told The Independent that during his time at an ACE school in the 1990s: "We were told that we were the children of God and the world was out to get us. So we were isolated and couldn't speak out. There was nobody checking on us. I just took it."

Pupils who have traditionally attended the schools tend to come from Christian families who follow a fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible. Former pupils said many of the children will have limited

interaction with mainstream society.

One former pupil, who attended a school in the 1990s and who has asked not to be named, said: "Exorcisms used to happen at school assemblies sometimes. There would be 20 or so children and perhaps five adults. We were told that the holy spirit would come through children. I started convulsing and I couldn't stop. Even when I went to bed I kept convulsing. I was terrified, I really thought it was the holy spirit.

"We would all begin convulsing. I remember them screaming blood curdling screams and then we'd all pray rigorously to get the demons out. Teachers would physically push us. They'd lay their hands on us when we prayed and they'd push us down. If you didn't fall it was said that you weren't really 'feeling the Lord'. It was a very dark thing. It really was insanity. It got completely out of control."

Two other former pupils from the 1990s and 2000s alleged they witnessed exorcisms performed on some occasions at other schools, where children were encouraged to "speak in tongues".

Allegations from ex-pupils include other potential concerns. At some schools, girls were groomed for marriage from a young age, two former students said. They claimed the grooming was done by the church communities that run the schools and by teachers. Methods were said to include controlling girls' sexuality and isolating them from boys their own age so they might later be married to much older male members of the church groups.

In some schools they were allegedly encouraged to marry soon after they turned 16, as church leaders told them it was "God's will".

One woman, who attended a school between the late 1990s and early 2000s, said: "There was one girl I knew who married someone more than 20 years older. The man she married had known her since she was seven years old and he was 30. She'd sit on his knee when she was a child. He'd played with her when she was a child. Now they're married. It's just really creepy.

"As a young girl, you were told you were not allowed to talk to boys your own age, you had to stand six inches apart from boys at all times at schools, teachers told you they'd hit you with a wooden paddle if you kiss a boy. So you didn't get to meet anyone else and then you're shown sexual interest for the first time and it's some creepy old man. It was so sexualised, they were sexualising children."

Another former pupil who attended an ACE school in the 1990s said a girl at her school had married a man at 16, when he was in his 40s, and who she had met when he began teaching at her school.

She said: "You were told from a young age that your role is to support a man and God will lead you to him. The role of women in these religious groups is quite clear. You're told God has chosen a husband for you and God will lead this man to you. But in reality, pastors and church leaders guide men to you. It's grooming."

She added: "When I was 18, I experienced it. From the age of 14, the church had been pushing me towards a man in the church group who was eight years older. I was actively encouraged to work with him. They were very pushy about marriage, it was very intimidating. It's very closed and isolating.

"As a girl, you're left feeling redundant if you don't get married. You're told it's God's will and you're just wasting time until you get married – it's your ultimate goal."

She said that none of the girls married before the legal age of consent, adding: "They are very keen to ensure nothing illegal happened, but the conditioning was around a long time before that."

Although all the claims made by former pupils for this article relate to historic incidents, textbooks still used by the schools – and seen by The Independent – raise current concerns.

The books suggest pupils are still taught that "the wife is to obey, respect and submit to the leadership of her husband, serving as a helper to him" and "God desires for [women] to submit to husband[s]."

Other pupils told The Independent there were also historic concerns about corporal punishment, which they say took on a religious characteristic at the ACE schools.

They claimed children were beaten with a wooden paddle and then forced into a ritualised religious quasi-ceremony in which prayers were said for their salvation in the 1980s and 1990s. They said that the church groups believed at the time that corporal punishment was "God's will" as it stopped children from sinning.

Corporal punishment was outlawed in UK private schools in 1998 and there is no suggestion the ACE schools breached that law.

David Waldock who attended an ACE school between the ages of 11 and 16 prior to 1998 said: "I was beaten with a cane by teachers while a pupil at an ACE school. The school was in the basement of the church. The cane was kept in the vestry. You would be led up to the vestry to a fold down desk, inside was a cardboard case and in that was the cane.

"The teachers explained to you your 'offence'. You were told to take your trousers down. Then you were bent over a chair with your trousers down and wearing just your underwear. Then you were caned. And then you prayed for forgiveness.

"It was very ritualised. It was a ritual of confession, administration and prayer for forgiveness."

One former pupil who attended an ACE school in the 1990s said a four-year-old boy at her school had special needs which caused him to urinate and defecate uncontrollably in class. She claims the child would be routinely taken to be beaten by the headmaster with a wooden paddle to punish this "bad behaviour".

She says knowing corporal punishment was happening to other children was extremely distressing: "I remember feeling sick. I was so frightened I dug my nails into my hands."

A 1993 copy of the ACE teachers' training manual, seen by The Independent, appears to instruct teachers in how to administer corporal punishment when children have "sinned" in ritualised religious ceremonies. It says: "Demerits are for procedural violations; the paddle is for moral violations."

The manual then lists a step by step process for hitting children.

"Using Bible verses, explain to the child the principles he has violated. Make sure he clearly understands what he has done wrong … position the child so he is leaning forward with his hands on a desk or chair and with his feet spread. Keep the paddle, switch, or belt low to avoid hitting the spine.

"Pray with the child following corporal correction. Review the offense and show him Hebrews 13.17. Request that he ask the Lord to forgive him for _____ (name the violation) and help him obey God's Word and those people God has placed in his life to train him."

An updated edition of the teacher training manual compiled after 1998 stops advocating corporal punishment by teachers at ACE schools. Christian Education Europe, an organisational body that runs and promotes ACE schools, say stocks of teaching manuals are regularly checked to ensure they are up to date.

A former pupil who attended an ACE school in the 1990s said: "The kind of people who send their children to schools like these believe in it absolutely. The pastor had absolute power and they could do anything."

Many of the former pupils quoted in this article have left the church groups and largely lead secular lives, meaning they have been ostracised by the church and some family members.

A spokesperson for Christian Education Europe said they were "shocked by the allegations" of the former pupils.

The spokesperson said they were "a provider of an extensive range of curriculum material and services but not responsible for the governance of individual schools" and added that it facilitates training to ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place.

They said: "Christian Education Europe inspects all the schools using the ACE programme and, running parallel with that, Ofsted has carried out official government inspections on all the schools also. We are delighted to confirm to you that findings meet government regulations and standards.

"We are aware, from safeguarding standards, it would be a criminal offence for information regarding known abuse not to be reported to the authorities. Regarding our resources, CEE regularly reviews the stock we hold to ensure all our materials comply with current legislation."

Angela Rayner, Labour's shadow Education Secretary, said: "These allegations are extremely disturbing and there must be an urgent Government investigation."

Jay Harman, faith schools and education campaigner at the British Humanist Association, told The Independent: "These are not problems specific to any one religion or to any one type of school, and wherever they are found they threaten the rights and well-being of children just as much as they may do our security. The sooner the authorities recognise that the better."

A spokesperson for the Department for Education, said: "Schools are held to account much more rigorously than was the case some 30 years ago and every institution, independent or state, must promote the fundamental British values of democracy and mutual respect for all. They are also required to adhere to the Equalities Act.

"Any allegation that those values are not being promoted or discrimination of any kind is taking place in the classroom will be investigated. If upheld, we will take swift action including, where necessary, the removal of an institution from the register of independent schools."

A spokesperson for Ofsted, said: "The Department for Education is the registration authority for all independent schools. It has laid down a set of standards that independent schools, including faith schools, are required to meet. Ofsted inspects these schools against these standards, at the

request of the DfE. Schools must comply with the standards in order to continue as a registered independent school.

"Independent schools are not required to follow the national curriculum, but they are required to teach a curriculum that encourages respect for other people."

Independent News Service

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Supermarket Edeka warns of exploding apple juice bottles

18/10

thelocal.de

THE LOCAL de

The Local · 20 Oct 2016, 14:50

Published: 20 Oct 2016 14:50 GMT+02:00 Updated: 20 Oct 2016 14:50 GMT+02:00

Edeka supermarket has recalled their "Gut und Günstig" range of apple juice drink due to the "risk of injury" from exploding bottles.

Germany's largest supermarket corporation has recalled one of its sparkling apple juice products as a "precautionary measure to protect its customers," Edeka announced on Wednesday.

All "Gut und Günstig Apfelschorle" (Good & Cheap Sparkling Apple Juice) in 0.5 litre bottles have been called back by the chain after some bottles became contaminated with yeast.

Any of the bottles with best-before dates between February 21st 2017 and March 1st 2017 - printed as 21.02.2017 to 01.03.2017 - could be affected.

The presence of yeast in the soft drink, which is manufactured by Urstromquelle GmbH & Co. KG in Brandenburg, can cause a fermentation process. This in turn could create a build-up of pressure inside the plastic bottles that could make them burst.

The fermentation will also start to make the juice go cloudy.

"Bottles whose contents start to go cloudy or expand should under no circumstances be opened, but immediately and carefully be disposed of," Edeka's press release stated.

The products are being sold by both Edeka and Marktkauf stores, and customers do not need their receipt to receive a refund if they return bottles to a store.

Edeka is not normally one to shy away from publicity. Last year its advertising campaign went viral, asking viewers to decide whether the people in the video were having an orgasm or enjoying an Edeka snack.

The Local Europe GmbH
Schwedter Strasse 227
10435 Berlin
Germany

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Judge rules against makers of gender test that some moms said exploded

2016-10-18

sandiegouniontribune.com



Dana Littlefield

Dana LittlefieldContact Reporter

A San Diego judge has ruled against the makers of a test used by pregnant women to predict an unborn child's gender, saying the company made misleading claims about whether the product worked and was safe for consumers to use at home.

Some women had testified that the test exploded when they mixed its chemicals with their urine. The city of San Diego brought the consumer protection lawsuit on behalf of California residents.

In a tentative ruling dated Oct. 4, the judge said it was unlikely the IntelliGender prediction test was valid, and determined that the Texas-based company's claims that the product was more than 90 percent accurate in laboratory tests were misleading or untrue.

IntelliGender had also asserted in its advertising that "real-world results" for use of the product were tracking at 82 percent, that the tests were manufactured in a facility certified by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and that they were packaged in a way that expectant mothers could use the tests safely and easily in their own homes.

Superior Court Judge Joel Wohlfeil said in his 116-page ruling that each of those claims was misleading or untrue, citing testimony from women who said the product had exploded when they tried to use it.

A 27-year-old mother from Modesto said she bought the gender test in September 2015 and that it "had worked for my friends." She was 10 weeks pregnant when she tried the product, following the instructions on the packaging.

Within five minutes, she said, the lid popped off the test and "everything exploded on the walls" and "on my face." She said her skin felt hot and itchy and she noticed red spots on her face. It also destroyed the paint on a wall.

The test did, however, accurately predict she would give birth to a boy.

The judge in his tentative ruling ordered the defendants to pay civil penalties in the amount of $250,000, far less than the millions sought by the city.

Attorneys for the city, argued that the IntelliGender product was "nothing more than Drano in a pretty box."

According to court documents, the tests contained sodium hydroxide — also known as lye — and aluminum, which when mixed in a small container with the woman's urine could cause a mini-explosion that, in some cases, left customers with chemical burns.

IntelliGender's lawyers said explosions could occur when a cap on the product wasn't properly secured, a problem addressed by improving the packaging.

The judge said "even a modest number of 'explosions/cap failures'... strikes the Court as inconsistent with the statement that expectant Mothers can safely take the tests in their own homes."

Wohlfeil said an explosion, even one that caused only negligible injuries, "is not a risk that consumers reasonably expected or assumed in taking the defendants' gender predictor test."

The kits cost $19.99 to $34.25, according to court documents.

Gerry Braun, a spokesman for the city, declined to comment on the tentative ruling. He said the lawsuit was filed by the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit of the City Attorney's Office, after the unit was contacted by a consumer and investigated the complaint.

The city filed its lawsuit in 2012 against IntelliGender LLC and its managers: Teresa Garland and Rebecca Griffin, both described as “the moms of IntelliGender,” Don Garland, Kurt Griffin and others, including several retailers.

The part of the lawsuit involving the retailers, including Amazon.com, Babies R’ Us, CVS Pharmacy, RiteAid Corp. and Target Corp., is expected to be tried later.

Attorney John Palter, has said his clients marketed their product based on “reasonable” information as to how well it predicted gender soon after the company was launched a decade ago, and they continued to make improvements and labeling changes to the product long before any lawsuits were filed.

In a phone interview Tuesday, he said the issues raised by the city could have been handled much more quickly had San Diego officials picked up the phone and called IntelliGender rather than filing the lawsuit.

“Despite our efforts to try to meet with the city to come up with changes in labeling that would be agreeable, the city believed that filing this case (and spending) taxpayers’ dollars was the right thing to do,” Palter said. “The city has not and did not effectively use taxpayers dollars to prosecute this case.”

He noted that the judge found the current labeling on the packaging of the gender tests contains “adequate safety warnings to alert consumers of the dangers” but the previous labeling — that stated only “keep out of the reach of children” — did not.

The product is still being sold, Palter said, but his clients who started the company no longer work there full time because of the costs they incurred fighting the lawsuit.

A status conference is scheduled for Nov. 10, when the judge is expected to hear objections to the proposed ruling from lawyers on both sides of the case.

dana.littlefield@sduniontribune.com

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Forced into his cult-like Ontario church as a teen and abused, woman spent years exposing 'The Prophet'

| *September 24, 2016 11:44 AM ET* nationalpost.com



JAMES MASTERS / Owen Sound Sun TimesFred King, centre (in green jacket), and his brother Joseph King, left, (in blue jacket), leave the Ontario Court of Justice following Fred King's bail hearing in Owen Sound on Wednesday, April 16, 2014.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Fred King led a church near Owen Sound where members were beaten and humiliated by the man they called the prophet. The law finally caught up with King last week, but it was a hollow victory for the woman who blew the whistle on his abusive practices.

In the end, the decision whether to accept a plea bargain for the abusive leader of a Southwestern Ontario church was put in the hands of the woman who suffered some of his cruellest blows.

Carol Christie contends she was forced into the Church of Jesus Christ Restored as a teenager by her mother, forced to be intimate as a minor with church founder Stan King, and later, his son Fred King and forced to endure beatings that ripped the fabric from her body and the spirit from her soul — claims that King denied in defending the lawsuit before settling out of court.



So when Grey County Crown attorney Michael Martin said just four days before the trial was to start in May that King was willing to plead guilty to assault charges if sex-related allegations were dropped, Martin recommended the deal, but said he'd go through with a trial if that's what Christie wanted.

"He was prepared to continue (with a trial) but recommended that we not," Christie's husband John Christie told The Free Press. Martin declined to be interviewed by The Free Press.

King admitted he squeezed a child's hand with crushing force, beat in front of parishioners a teen after she'd tried to run away and stripped a young man in front of his mother, then left him standing outside for hours at night as mosquitoes bit him.

Fred King's willingness to plead guilty to some charges stunned his victims, who as members of his church outside Chatsworth, near Owen Sound, were taught to call him "prophet" and to believe what he said was the word of God.

"We never thought we'd get a confession from him. We were taken back," John Christie said.

It was Carol Christie who blew the whistle on King, fleeing his grip in 2008, marrying John a year later, writing a book that alleged she was one of King's seven wives, appearing on CTV's W5 in

2012 and filing a lawsuit that was settled out of court with a payment.

> Fred King was a vicious tyrant. He used his cult to bend vulnerable people to do whatever suited his will

That King was only sentenced last week to 18 months in jail and two years of probation disappointed the lawyer who represented Christie and other victims in civil cases.

John Tamming doesn't blame the judge or Martin but does take aim at a higher authority. "The (judge) is constrained in such cases by what our Court of Appeal has approved as an appropriate bandwidth for such sentences. Clearly, I am disappointed that such pattern of abuse can result in such a relatively minor penalty (and Mr. King will doubtless serve only a part of this sentence)," Tamming wrote in response to questions from The Free Press.

"Fred King was a vicious tyrant. He used his cult to bend vulnerable people to do whatever suited his will. The public beatings and humiliations that took place in the Chatsworth meeting house in particular ensured him a compliant congregation. His mad and violent outbursts also maintained a cowed group of employees who were fully prepared to work for years at slave wages in his printing plant. I would have hoped that placed in that context, the assaults to which he pleaded guilty would have attracted a much longer prison term."

There was a time, not so long ago, that Carol and John Christie thought a trial might be best, not only because it would expose King's atrocities but also the great extent to which his followers were brainwashed.

"We were, in one way, looking forward to the trial," John Christie said. "(Church members defending King would) all be sticking to the same script with very little variation from what they were told to say."



But they also believed that King's lawyer would attack the mental stability of Carol Christie. They knew it would be difficult to prove allegations of sexual assaults and crimes without third-party witnesses. And they were convinced church members would testify to whatever King commanded.



"The prophet is all-powerful in this. He's supposed to be their direct link to God and they do not question that," John Christie said.

Four days before the scheduled trial in May, Christie agreed to the plea bargain.

There's no dispute 18 months in jail pales compared to longer sentences given for crimes of lesser significance, John Christie said. They're disappointed, too, that King wasn't charged with polygamy but understand that such a charge might not stick because King consummated all marriages but one in bed — only one wife had a marriage licence, Christie said.

But John Christie and his wife focus on what they did accomplish. "There's the satisfaction of knowing we did our best. The church is disbanded. The printing company that financially supported it is on shaky ground. There are few more escapees. Fred is serving a sentence we've been able to get information to the public that this sort of thing can happen in your own backyard."

- 'The Prophet' of cult-like church near Owen Sound, gets 18 months for assaulting members

Carol Christie chose not to attend the sentencing last Wednesday, her emotional energy spent from an eight-year battle to expose the church and its practices, her husband explained. For the same reason she asked her husband to respond to questions about the sentencing and the church.

After the sentencing, she cried tears of relief, her husband said. "It's over," she said. "It's really over."

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Fainting of 22 girls attributed to 'evil spirits'

By: Leo Udtohan / @inquirerdotnet Philippine Daily Inquirer / 01:24 AM October 14, 2016





Doctors can't explain rise in girls' blood pressure, hysterical reactions. —HANS ATUP/ CONTRIBUTOR

UBAY, Bohol—Amid the absence of a scientific explanation, authorities are attributing to evil spirits the mass hysteria of female students at a school in the village of San Pascual.

At least 22 students of San Pascual Academy (SPA) convulsed, screamed and fainted inside their classrooms, prompting teachers to suspend classes.

Renato Alacida, village chief of San Pascual, said the mass hysteria happened around 9 a.m. on Wednesday.

Most of the students, who had been possessed by evil spirits according to Alacida, were from Grades 7, 8, 10 and 11 classes.

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Hans Atup, a staffer at the Ubay mayor's office, said most of the students were brought to the adjacent San Pascual Church where prayers were immediately offered.

Atup said Ubay Mayor Constantino Reyes went to the school to check.

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OCTOBER 13, 2016

Alacida said members of the rural health office went to the school and checked on the students and found that their vital signs were normal, except for eight students who were brought to Don Emilio del Valle Memorial Hospital for more medical tests.

"They became weak after shouting and their blood pressure increased," he said.

SPA, a Catholic and private high school, was established in 1968. Every morning, the school requires students to pray the rosary before classes.

The incident in San Pascual came a week after 41 female students of Japer Memorial School in Barangay Catalina in Sagbayan town were also reported to have been possessed by evil spirits.

The tally of supposedly possessed students rose in a span of almost a month until Thursday last week.

According to residents, the hysteria started after a gmelina tree inside the school was cut down. The incident prompted parents not to send their children to school last week. All classes resumed on Monday, however.

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Duterte: UN, US, EU can't be brighter than me
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TAGS: Bohol, Evil spirits, San Pascual, Ubay

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AlexanderAmproz • 11 hours ago
Send Pacquiao, Lapid, Sotto, Bongbong and Duterte for investigation
1 • Reply • Share ›

AlexanderAmproz • 11 hours ago
There is only one kind of evil spirit in the Philippines,
lack and weird education brought by a twisted Colonial Clergy 450 years ago.

The backward Evil representatives are the Duterte and cohorts

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Ferdie S • 16 hours ago

I'd say this is caused by intense orgasm!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Tonton • 17 hours ago

How to find a scientific explanation when you don't want one?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



vit _C_smoothie • 18 hours ago

Mass sociogenic illness is the more proper and correct term for what's beleaguering these students. Even the Catholic Church has stringent rules before a case is deemed proper for exorcism like medical and psychological issues must first be ruled out. Anyway, Bohol authorities, please enlighten your minds. Research and learn more about what once was termed mass hysteria, i.e., MSI or mass sociogenic illness.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



C_N1lingus69 • 18 hours ago

Mass synchronization of menstrual cycles lead to mass orgasms! Lolz!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



teddyDdog • 18 hours ago

PRAYING TO MARY WHO THE BIBLE ONLY MENTIONS IN PASSING 4 TIMES YET CALLING HER QUEEN OF HEAVEN WITH NO MENTION OF THE "PERPETUAL VIRGIN" MOTHER OF 6 EVER EVEN GOING TO HEAVEN HAS SPARKED GODS



C_N1lingus69 • 18 hours ago

Must be mass hysteria they all contracted listening to D5 and her tantrums! Lol!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



mad_as_Hamlet • 18 hours ago

* * * * *

That this incident happened under
Duterte's presidency could be no
mere coincidence.

With the thousands of ghosts still roaming
around after being whisked into the spirit world
with only very scanty bio-data and statement of
liabilities indicated on cardboards, both heaven and
hell are in a quandary regarding what to to do with them.
And too many ghosts floating around can affect the
balance of nature.

A legislative investigation by both houses of Congress
to unearth what on earth happened to these female
students is certainly warranted. Its committees on
ways and means and foreign relations can take the lead.

- - -

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



C_N1lingus69 ➔ mad_as_Hamlet • 18 hours ago

Did TB enter your brain?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Bobby • 19 hours ago

You want a scientific explanation?

Here it is - The students gathered together and decided "You want to be in the news? Let's fake a mass hysteria."

If I were the school authorities, Id' check the records of each of the students to see if further investigation is warranted and if necessary, expel them.

3 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



C_N1lingus69 ➚ Bobby • 18 hours ago

Yooooooooooooooooooooutube!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



The Idealist and Optimist • 20 hours ago

Really people still believe this?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Jenny Quibuyen • 20 hours ago

Isa sa mga rason kung bakit hanggang ngayon bulok pa rin ang Pilipinas. Mga ungaz, meron na tayong tinatawag na siyensya, baka naman gusto nyong gamitin para di kayo na stuck sa stone age na paniniwala. Age of information na pero meron pa ring mga ganito.... hayyyyysss.. no wonder andaming mga d*****tards.. lols

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



klepto • 20 hours ago

THESE STUDENTS NEED TO SHIT EVERYDAY OTHERWISE, GAS WOULD ACCUMULATE IN THEIR INTESTINES AND TRAVEL TO THEIR HEADS VIA THE SPINAL CORD AND NOT ONLY FUCK UP THEIR BRAINS BUT ALSO CAUSE THEM TO THINK OF SHITTY IDEAS

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



A great way to get out of school Superstitious idiots!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Joemkc • 21 hours ago

HA! Ha! This is funny. Only in the Philippines does the Catholic Church spend more time Fighting Politicians to keep them from passing Laws which are not approved by the Church. While they forget their duties of keeping Evil Spirits from taking over their Sheep.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Islander • 21 hours ago

You know what? All you need to do is just to say "P.I. kayo mga evil spirits" At biglang mawala yan, hahaha.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Islander • 21 hours ago

The only evil spirits here are the local church who did not correct the students' superstition. And the Inquirer is to blame too. Come on, evil spirits in this time and age? Ask your reporter-intern to Google "mass hysteria". And, next time, please ask also the opinion of psychologists, not just the superstition-mongers.

5 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



D P ➚ Islander • 19 hours ago

They shouldn't have to Google mass hysteria, they been building it for over 100 days now.

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Ben Tisoy power • 21 hours ago

Japer Memorial School, is it also a Catholic school like San Pascual Academy?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



GOD • 21 hours ago

YOU JUST CAN NOT FIX STUPID...here is a prime example

5 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

bartverano • 21 hours ago

Evil spirits.....bwa ha ha ha.

Ramp up the hysteria.

Maybe the DDS can extra judicially eliminate these evil spirits.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Steven • 21 hours ago

It's beyond words, Never read anything like this. Although i believe in good and bad. Maybe these girls take on all the bad in Philippines right now. So they and the country be Blessed for this,

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Steven ➚ Steven • 21 hours ago

the girl from picture was fully dressed white, like virgin white and pure.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Exo • a day ago

What is surprising in this kind of incident is that only the girls are affected. In any news about this topic, it is always the girls only being possessed. It seems that the girls are easier to possess than the boys. Bakit kaya?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Jenny Quibuyen ➚ Exo • 20 hours ago



true_filipino • a day ago

baka naman kasalanan ng cook sa canteen at hinalo sa spaghetti yng violet na mushrooms dun sa tabi ng pinutol na puno... tigas ng ulo eh...

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



sherlyn • a day ago

Is this really true? There are evil spirits???
It's a Catholic school and the students are very religious. This should be investigated by the Senate to prevent these from happening again.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Lou Gumm-77 • a day ago

There are those who dismissed evil possession. There are many documented incidents of demon possession. Idolatry or having many idols inside the house could cause increased activities of the evil spirits. Many are afflicted with fear and depression due to ignorance of God's Word. It was given to us to protect us, but many are clueless of its power. 2 Tim.1:7,"For God has not given us the spirit of fear; of power, and of love, and of sound mind." Fear has a strong spirit as well as depression. Many are afflicted for lack of Bible knowledge how to resist these evil spirits.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

nov • a day ago

wag na kse pasikatin sa balita!!!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Mang Tasyo • a day ago

"Mass hysteria...defined as an imagined or assumed threat that causes physical symptoms among a large number of people. Sociologist Robert Bartholomew, author of several books on mass hysteria, including The Martians Have Landed: A History of Media-Driven Panics and Hoaxes, explained that mass hysteria symptoms typically include smelling gas, seeing

strange objects, acting like animals, and fainting. Mass hysteria is a short-term event that may or may not have a specific cause. According to Bartholomew, people can start having real symptoms just from stories they hear, and sometimes, there is no real explanation for why mass hysteria happens; it just happens."

Reply • Share ›

D P ➔ Mang Tasyo • a day ago

We know it very well. We have the 'Mighty" 3%.

Reply • Share ›

AllaMo • a day ago

The marcoses, enriles, estradas, revillas, arroyos, binays, cojuancos, ampatuans, napoleses, or duterte? Or all of the aforementioned?

1 Reply • Share ›

johnrey77 ➔ AllaMo • 21 hours ago

Pinaquiao mo nang lahat

Reply • Share ›

Pio Gante • a day ago

another of those mumbo jumbo stories

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People are bidding real money for the most ridiculously fake new £5 notes

17:42, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 17:42, 1 Nov 2016 By Joshua Barrie

mirror.co.uk

People are still trying their luck selling new £5 notes – real or fake, rare or common.

The latest batch of hopefuls are really pushing the boat out. They're hand-drawing new fivers and trying to flog them on eBay.

Adam Purcell, 24, is one of the pioneers of the mockery. When he listed on eBay his very obviously fake £5 note, a simple sketch more scribble than money, he saw bids roll in.

They broke the £10,000 mark.



Getty

People are selling their new five pound notes

Adam, from Bournemouth, described his item as a "rare misprint on white paper and graphite ink".

"I was surprised it got as high as it did before it was taken down," he told the *LadBible .*

"I've seen a lot of articles about people flogging five pound notes for a ridiculous amount of money, so I thought I'd have a laugh with it using my incredible, artistic talents."

Sadly for Adam, eBay didn't allow the sale. But that's not deterred others from trying the same. They've also been getting their pencils and A4 sheets of paper out.

One seller appears to have accrued £200 after a single bid came in for this hand-drawn lot. The eBay listing remains and the winning bid has been confirmed.

It's got an alien on the front...



Ebay

An alien currency?

And, on the reverse, says something about the "Bank of the New Order".

Only a clown would buy this?

A third item is – at the time of writing – still up for auction. It's another fake fiver.

"You are bidding on an extremely rare new five-pound note," the description says.



Ebay

"It is unique due to the misspelling of the word England.



Ebay

People like buying art

"It was also accidentally printed on Wilkinson's A4 paper, which makes this auction a colossal investment.

"The mint did try to destroy this one but somehow it managed to escape from the building."

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Family sues funeral home over body mix-up

wchstv.com

By Sean DeLancey Friday, October 28th 2016



CHARLESTON, WV (**WCHS/WVAH**) - A lawsuit filed Friday in Kanawha County, West Virginia, targets the Bartlett-Burdett-Cox Funeral Home.

The lawsuit alleges the funeral home mixed up two bodies in January 2016, leading to a host of emotional trouble for daughter Peggy Bowles and the Yost family.

"The mistake just kept happening," Bowles said, "It was no single mistake."

Bowles said her mother's dying wish was to have a closed casket funeral and that was far from what happened.

"When her life was over, I thought, OK, now I pass her on and they will take care of her for her last little journey. That didn't happen," Bowles said.

The lawsuit claimed B-B-C Funeral Home mixed Yost's body up with another woman Margaret Fraser.

It said Yost was displayed, open casket, to Fraser's friends and family at a viewing, and then buried in Fraser's grave later that same day.

"Just the thought that she was buried in someone else's grave, that she had someone else's clothes on, I didn't anticipate it," Bowles said.

Bowles' attorney Russell Williams said in addition to damages they want to make sure this doesn't happen to another family.

"The goal is to hold these defendants accountable for what they've done, and make sure this doesn't happen to anyone else in the future," Williams said.

The B-B-C funeral home closed it's doors shortly after the lawsuit said the mix-up happened.

Eyewitness News reached out to the parent company, which still operated other funeral homes in the state, and never received a response.

Madeline Yost's remains were exhumed from Fraser's grave, and she was buried next to her husband.

Charleston, WV

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Famous McSorley's bar closed by health inspectors

NEW YORK (FOX5NY)

fox5ny.com

FOX

McSorley's Old Ale House was shut down due to rats and other health code violations.

Posted: Nov 11 2016 07:40AM EST

Updated: Nov 11 2016 08:52AM EST

- One of New York's oldest and most famous bars was ordered closed by the city due to health code violations.

McSorely's Old Ale House was closed on Wednesday after an inspection found evidence of rat activity, food held at the wrong temperature, and conditions conducive to vermin and pest activity.

The owner's son-in-law, Gregory Delahaba says they are in the process of putting new gas lines into the building and walls, floor and concrete have been opened, giving vermin access to the building.



Famous_bar_closed_0_20161111122927

The owner says it's the first time the bar, which survived prohibition, has been closed since 1854.

The city says that once the problems are solved, the bar can request a reopening inspection.

McSorley's is located at 15 E. 7th St. in the East Village. It got its start as an Irish working man's saloon and was the last of the "Men Only" pubs in the city. It didn't admit women until it was forced to in 1970. Some of its famous patrons include Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt and Hunter S. Thompson.

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Farragut student suspended for extra chicken nugget

Travis Dorman , travis.dorman@knoxnews.com

knoxnews.com

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Carson Koller

Farragut High School senior Carson Koller

Justice has been served for a Farragut High School student after his suspension for buying an extra chicken nugget in the lunch line was overturned.

Carson Koller received the one-day suspension on Monday for buying the extra nugget.

Koller — a senior, Eagle Scout and the captain of the band's drum line — was suspended for theft of property after he took six chicken nuggets from the lunch line instead of the usual five, to his mother's outrage.

"How is it theft if he paid for it?" Koller's mother, Carrie Koller Waller, wrote in a Facebook post. "It's food. FOOD!!! Not weapons. Not drugs. Not alcohol. Not cheating on a test. ... I am shaking my head over this and not sure what to do. Laugh, punish, argue, dress him up as a nugget bandit, or let it go."

The suspension was rescinded on Tuesday morning after Waller sent a letter to several school administrators and spoke to Farragut Principal Ryan Siebe on the phone.

"I know it wasn't your intent to overcharge Carson and I know it was not my son's intent to steal an extra nugget from you," Waller wrote in the letter, which she posted to Facebook. "He was hungry. He took six total nuggets. He entered his number, and the cashier rang him up. The cashier then realized Carson had more food than what she calculated. He entered his number again and paid the additional charge. Everything on his tray was paid for prior to walking away. He was then asked for his name and told to sit in another area and speak to the principal."

School officials initially said Koller had stolen the nugget, but a screenshot posted by Waller on Facebook showed her son had been charged three times for the lunch — one extra lunch charge of $2.75, one lunch entree charge of $2.50, and another charge of $2.75.

"Principal Siebe reviewed the matter and found there was some misinformation about the details, and after further investigation, corrected the situation," Knox County Schools spokeswoman Carly Harrington said.

Harrington didn't give specifics.

Waller wrote in a Facebook post that she was pleased with how Siebe handled the situation once she presented the facts of the situation to him.

"He was very willing to review the situation and make things right," she wrote. "Carson only missed part of his first class today."

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Man arrested after Brit found dead on Malaga airport bench

08:24 EST, 27 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Finnish man described as a 'well-built giant' is arrested on suspicion of manslaughter after British man was found dead, stripped and tied to an airport bench in Spain

- **Steven Allford, 51, was found on a bench outside Malaga airport**
- **He had his hand and leg tied to bench with cable ties and trousers down**
- **Slice of ham was on each buttock and his genitals were in an open tuna can**
- **Police arrested Finnish man aged around 50 on suspicion of manslaughter**
- **A post-mortem revealed Mr Allford had choked to death on his own vomit,**

By Gerard Couzens In Madrid For Mailonline

Police probing the death of a British man found at Malaga Airport bound to a bench with his trousers pulled down have arrested a man on suspicion of his manslaughter.

Steven Allford, 51, was found dead last Friday. A slice of ham had been placed on each of his buttocks and his genitals put inside a tuna can.

A Finnish national aged around 50 was held on Wednesday at an undisclosed location.

He has been remanded in jail pending an ongoing judicial probe following a private court hearing before an investigating judge.

A source close to the case described the suspect as a 'well-built giant.'

It is not known what his relationship, if any, was to the dead man.

Scroll down for video



Shocked tourists filmed the moment Mr Allford's body was put onto a stretcher and taken away after police searched the area for clues to the suspected killing

The source said: 'He is being investigated at this stage on suspicion of a crime of manslaughter although that could change as the judicial probe progresses.'

Further arrests have not been ruled out.

News of the detention came shortly after it emerged a prosecutor specialising in hate crimes had agreed to take on the bizarre case and police were hunting three men seen with Mr Allford, who was sleeping rough at Malaga Airport, on the night he died.

The specialist prosecutor agreed to investigate the strange death after a complaint from a homeless support organisation.

Observatorio Hatento, an amalgamation of several charities across Spain which work with homeless people, says Mr Allford's death could be a hate crime based on hobophobia - a fear of vagrants.

A post-mortem revealed Mr Allford had choked to death on his own vomit.

Steven Allford, 51, was discovered bound to a bench in a landscaped area by an airport train stop with his trousers and pants pulled down

Murder squad detectives are probing the bizarre death of the British man at Malaga airport

A sexual attack has not been ruled out because of the circumstances in which he was found - tied face-down to the bench with his trousers pulled down and a slice of ham placed on each of his buttocks.

The fact the suspect is being investigated at this stage on suspicion of manslaughter means the authorities think Mr Allford may have been bound to the bench before he died.

His body was discovered just before 9am last Friday in a landscaped area of Malaga Airport by a train stop well-used by tourists and opposite the arrivals lounge.

It is not known where in the UK Mr Allford was originally from, although he is believed to have spent some time living in Spain.

Investigators have discovered he has a conviction for fraud from a court in Catalunya.

The prison the unnamed Finnish suspect has been sent to - Alhaurin de la Torre near Malaga- is understood to be the jail Mr Allford also served part of his sentence in after being convicted.

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Fishermen Capture 14-Pound 'Sea Monster' Lobster Off Bermuda's Shore

huffingtonpost.com

They were totally taken by surprise.

10/17/2016 04:20 pm ET
Nina GolgowskiTrends reporter, The Huffington Post

A 14-pound lobster caught off the coast of Bermuda left fishermen breathless one day after Hurricane Nicole swept through the area last week.

The lobster got caught on a mooring line, which was holding a nearby boat in place.

Matthew Jones, who helped reel in the creature, said his co-worker, Tristan Loescher, didn't realize what he had until he was swimming beside it with a flashlight.

"He swam out, expecting to find a gray snapper, and found a lobster instead," Jones told The Huffington Post on Monday. "This was caught totally by accident."

"Hurricane Nicole blew in some sea monsters... 14lb lobster, caught and released!" reads a caption on a picture that fishing charter company Sanctuary Marine Bermuda posted to Facebook on Saturday.

"Most of the time a 10-pound is the biggest anyone will typically see in their lifetime," Jones said. "Each leg measured 2 feet, but I do believe they get much bigger."

The fishermen considered giving the creature, which they identified as a male, to an aquarium. Ultimately, however, they decided to return it to the water.

"It was one of the biggest lobsters we've ever seen," he said. "It's not typically caught that way so we decided to let it go."

"It's a rare specimen," he said. "We got lucky this time."

The Bermuda lobster is indeed a beast, but it's far from the largest lobster ever caught.

Fishermen set a world record in 1977 by catching a 44-pound lobster off Nova Scotia.

Other lobsters have tried to rival that gargantuan's size, including "Rocky," a 27-pounder that was caught off the coast of Maine in 2012.

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Scientists baffled as five lionesses grow a mane and act like males

15:12 EST, 24 September 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

By Rachael Burford For Mailonline

Five lionesses have baffled scientists after they sprouted manes and started to act like males.

The pride have even been seen roaring and mounting other females at the Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana.

The lions are now being studied by researchers at the University of Sussex.



Lionesses with manes (pictured) at the Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana are baffling scientists because they have developed male characteristics and behaviours

Geoffrey Gilfillan, from the university of Sussex, started studying one of the lionesses known as SaF05 in March 2014. At the time she had a small mane and was larger than most females, but now four others have seemingly developed the same male characteristics (pictured)



Geoffrey Gilfillan, from the university, started studying one of the lionesses known as SaF05 in March 2014.

At the time she had a small mane and was larger than most females, but now four others have seemingly developed the same male characteristics.

Mr Gilfillan told the, New Scientist that, although SaF05 was still mating with males and acting in a mostly female manor, she was also roaring, excessively scent marking and mounting other lionesses.

She had even been spotted killing the cubs of another pride, behaviour extremely rare of a lionesses but more common from males.

Male lions use their impressive manes and loud roars to attract mates and warn off other lions.

Females are hardly ever heard roaring.

There have been reports of other wild maned lionesses but they are very rare and little is known about the phenomenon.



A male lion (pictured) uses his mane and powerful roar to attract a mate and warn off other lions and predators

Usually a lionesses (pictured) are smaller than males and do not roar or excessively scent mark

Luke Hunter, president and chief conservation officer at the global wild cat conservation organisation Panthera, said that increased levels of testosterone were probably the reason for the behavior.



In 2011, a captive lioness at the National Zoological Garden, South Africa developed a mane and tests revealed increased testosterone because of a problem in her ovaries.

When her ovaries were removed, the male behavior and mane also disappeared.

It is thought the pride of lionesses could all share a gene that is causing the male behavior and physical characteristics.

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Out of the dark: Five years on from Eta ceasefire

18/10

thelocal.es



Out of the dark: Five years on from Eta ceasefire

The Local · 20 Oct 2016, 12:29

Published: 20 Oct 2016 12:29 GMT+02:00

Five years after armed separatist group Eta declared a permanent ceasefire, Basque journalist Alberto Letona is still wondering when the dialogue will begin.

Five years ago today, the armed group Eta declared a permanent ceasefire. Three masked militants made a statement on video that the band was giving up violence. They urged Mr. Zapatero's Spanish government to start a political dialogue. Many Basques and Spaniards felt relieved and thought that the time for politics have finally arrived. Without the threat of terrorism everything would be easier, or that was at least what we were led to think.

It is difficult to express in words how happy I was with the announcement. The burden of violence had engulfed not only my own community, but the whole of Spain for five long decades. It was like coming out of a dark and suffocating tunnel.

I had no experience of my country without demonstrations, tortures, detentions, killings and bombs. I was only fifteen when thousands of people in the Basque Country poured out to streets to protest against the trial of sixteen Basque Eta activists.

I still remember the bloody face of an elderly woman battered by the police in Bilbao. I have never forgotten it. Spain was under Franco's dictatorship and the regime's brutality was unquestionable. At that time you could be punished or even go to prison for speaking in Basque. Any sign of national identity was tantamount to separatism.

By the time I entered university Eta was popular amongst the students. We believed in a "new" world, and the experiences of Algeria, Cuba, and even Vietnam had caused a great impact on us. Socialism and the independence of the Basque Country seemed then like a very achievable goal. How naive and wrong we were.

Franco died in bed. Many of his former comrades were swift to adapt to a fledgling democracy, some of them without sincere convictions. Democracy progressed, sometimes with great difficulties, and formal liberties were restored.

Eta went on as if nothing had changed. The killings, mainly police and security members, were more and more frequent and the action-repression mechanism was soon in full flow. In 1980 alone, the most tragic year, 93 people were killed by the group, more than double the number of the (Eta) victims during the Franco's years. At home, my mother, a Basque refugee from the Spanish civil war, sentenced: "Violence won't work. Sooner or later people will turn their backs on them."

In its mad blindness Eta lost a large part of the support they had enjoyed in the precedent years of Francoism, not only in the Basque region, but also in Spain.

They never regained this support, not even when years later (1983- 1987) twenty-six people, many of them members of Eta were killed in the south of France by an obscure organization called GAL funded with money from the Ministry of Security. The minister and a high rank politician ended up in prison, but with lenient sentences.

For many years the Basque independentists of Herri Batasuna (a coalition that had to change its name multiple times in the past) was seen as a close ally to Eta. It was banned in 2003 and its leaders arrested.



Basque separatist leader, Arnaldo Otegi in San Sebastian. Photo: AFP

With growing dissatisfection within its ranks, more than five hundred prisoners scattered in Spanish and French prisons, and very poor political achievements, the independentists opted for the obvious but most difficult task ; convince Eta to give up violence and follow the path of politics. Arnaldo Otegi, the veteran leader of Bildu and former member of Eta, managed to persuade his old comrades.

Eta has not yet handed over their arms, but here in the Basque Country we are convinced that they will not use them again. Five decades of hate, pain and suffering has been enough.

In the regional elections of last September, Bildu, the pro- independence coalition, was the second most voted for political force. The most centralists options (Popular Party and Socialist Party) were relegated to the lowest ranks.

"While violence exists, we will not engage in political dialogue" used to be the line from successive Spanish governments. Now, that the guns and bombs have been silent for five years, many Basques wonder where the dialogue is, and if "terrorism" was just a perfect excuse to hide a political problem that Madrid chooses to ignore.

Alberto Letona is a Basque journalist living in Bilbao. He is the author of Hijos e Hijas de la Gran Bretaña - Sons and Daughters of Great Britain – in which he delves into the psyche of the British in an attempt to explain them to his own countrymen.

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THE FLANNAN ISLES LIGHTHOUSE MYSTERY

by: sjhstrangetales

wordpress.com

https://sjhstrangetales.wordpress.com/2012/01/10/the-flannan-isles-lighthouse-mystery/

sjhstrangetales

Posted on: January 10, 2012

In December 1900 three lighthouse-keepers, Thomas Marshall, James Ducat and Donald McArthur, on the lonely outcrop of the Flannan Isles, approx 20 miles from the Outer Hebrides, western Scotland, disappeared without trace. No solution to their disappearance has ever been found, and for over a 100 years now this case has been of endless fascination to those of us who love unsolved mysteries. The riddle of the Flannan Isles has inspired stories, poems, songs, even an opera. Endless speculations about their fate have been imaginative in the extreme. Something about the mystery of these 3 men, isolated at the edge of the world, surrounded by the hostile Atlantic Ocean, gets under our skin.

The Flannan Isles (also known as the Seven Hunters) are named after a 7th century Irish priest called St Flannan. Apart from the 70 years when the lighthouse was manned, the windswept islands have always largely been uninhabited. The only other structure on the islands, apart from the lighthouse, is a tiny ruined chapel, dedicated to St Flannan. The islands were always viewed with great superstition by the Hebrideans, and although they used the islands to graze sheep, believed it was unlucky to spend a night there. They observed such practices as removing your hat and upper clothing, and turning in a sunwise direction, when arriving there.

The lighthouse was constructed in the 1890s on the island known as Eilean Mor (Big Isle). It took 4 years, and building work was continually hampered by the difficulties of safely landing supplies on the island, and the tempestuousness of the wild Atlantic Ocean. The lighthouse first went into operation on 7 December 1899. It had no wireless communication, and its only communication with the outside world was a series of semaphore-style balls on posts, which could be seen by the Hebrides on a good day.

The mystery begins on the night of 15 December 1900, when a squall broke out in the vicinity of the islands. The crew of a passing ship, the Fairwind, were angry and disturbed that no guiding light from the newly-built Flannan Isles lighthouse appeared to be in operation. Likewise the steamer Archtor (or Archer as I've also seen it recorded), when it docked at Oban, reported that the light was not operating. Nothing appears to have been done about it. Perhaps the authorities felt that it was best to wait a few days, as the relief ship, the Hesperus, was due to sail out to the islands on the 20th December.

Bad weather delayed the sailing though, and the Hesperus didn't set out until dawn on Boxing Day, carrying fresh supplies for the lighthouse, and Joseph Moore, who was due to relieve one of the other keepers on watch duty. Moore was anxious about the mystery of the dead light. He knew that it was virtually unheard of for lighthouse-keepers to allow a light to go out like that. It was said that during the short voyage to the islands he was restless, filled with foreboding, pacing the deck and refusing any breakfast.

Things were eerie on the lighthouse island from the moment they arrived. There was no welcoming committee from the three men, (who would normally have been outside to greet them), no provisions boxes had been put out to be re-stocked, and the flag wasn't up on the flagstaff. The Hesperus moored in silence, and Joseph Moore headed for the lighthouse, calling out as he headed towards it.

Inside the lighthouse nothing looked out of order. The lamps were trimmed, the beds were tumbled, as if they men had just got up, the washing-up done, cold ashes in the grate. Other reports have it that a chair was overturned in the kitchen, (although some observers believe this was a later, journalistic, embellishment), and the clocks had all stopped. What is agreed is that two sets of outdoor gear were missing, and only one set of oilskins remained. Which meant one of the men had gone out without his protective weather gear on. Something that would have been virtually unheard of. Not only was this wholly impractical, but for all 3 men to leave the light unattended at once went against the rules laid down by the Northern Lighthouse Board. The only set of outdoor clothing which remained belonged to Donald McArthur.

So much myth and folklore has grown up over the Flannan Isles mystery, that some have reported that when Joseph Moore first opened the main door, three strange birds flew out, and, as the lighthouse tower was searched,odd strands of seaweed were found on the stairs, and in the little cubby-hole where the lighthouse logbook was kept.

A comprehensive search was also made of the island itself. At the west landing stage they found extraordinary damage. Iron railings were bent out of shape, and the iron railway by the path was completely wrenched out of the concrete. The conclusion was that the damage had been caused during a terrible storm.

Captain Garvie sent a telegram to the Northern Lighthouse Board, saying that "a dreadful accident" had happened at Flannan. He concluded the "poor fellows must have blown over the cliffs or drowned trying to rescue a crane or something like that".

When the logbook was perused, it made for disturbing reading. Keeper Thomas Marshall recorded as follows:

"December 12. Gale north by northwest. Sea lashed to fury. Never seen such a storm. Waves very high. Tearing at lighthouse. Everything shipshape. James Ducat irritable".

Later that day: "Storm still raging, wind steady. Stormbound. Cannot go out. Ship passing sounding foghorn. Could see lights of cabins. Ducat quiet. Donald McArthur crying".

"December 13. Storm continued through night. Wind shifted west by north. Ducat quiet. McArthur praying". Later: "Noon, grey daylight. Me, Ducat and McArthur prayed".

On 14 December there was no entry in the log.

The final entry was made on a slate, which (under normal circumstances) would have been transferred to the logbook proper later on:

"December 15. 1pm. Storm ended, sea calm. God is over all".

It was on the evening of the 15th that it was observed that the light hadn't been lit. So the men must have disappeared sometime in the few hours between the last log entry and night-fall, which at that

time of year, and in that area would have occurred at around 4 PM.

There is much controversy over the log entries. Most particularly, the highly emotive quality of the entries. This was an official log-book, the entries would ordinarily have been the bare bones of the daily running of the light. It wasn't a private diary, there for the men to record their feelings. Take the entry where Marshall records "James Ducat irritable". It has been pointed out that Ducat was Marshall's superior. This would be akin to someone writing on the office messageboard that the boss was in a bad mood. If the men had lived, The Northern Lighthouse Board would have asked Marshall to explain why he had made such a personal entry. Also Ducat was reputed to have normally been a very good-natured man. Such irritability would have been out-of-character (although I have to say that even the most good-natured of men might have suffered irritability in those trying circumstances).

The "McArthur crying" entry is also extraordinary. It makes McArthur sound like a snivelling boy, when by all accounts he was a tough old sea-dog, of many years experience. On the mainland he was known as a bit of a brawler. He must have endured his fair share of violent storms over the years, so why did this one reduce him to a pulp?

The final entry also aroused some surprise. Superintendent Muirhead, who was part of the official investigation into the disapperances, knew all the men personally, and said he had never thought of any of them as particularly God-fearing, or prone to prayer.

Writer Mike Dash has suggested that the logbook entries may in fact have been a hoax, that they were written afte the 15th December. It's unlikely we'll ever know the truth to that, but if the entries were faked, then WHY?? After I first blogged about this case, I was contacted by Mike Dash, who said that the log-book entries had been invented by an American pulp fiction magazine, who had invented that angle to jazz the story up for their readers. Some things never change I guess.

The Northern Lighthouse Board carried out an official investigation into the disappearances, and concluded that it was most likely that the men had been swept away by a freak wave as they were trying to secure things on the west landing area. That two of the men had got into trouble, and that McArthur had dashed outside in his shirt-sleeves to help them.

There have of course been much more dramatic explanations for the mystery, such as sea monsters and aliens. It has even been speculated that a long-boat full of ghosts were seen heading to the islands on the night the light went dark. Some have said that the long-boat full of ghosts may in fact have been the three lighthouse-keepers rowing furiously away.

I'll close with the words of Superintendent Muirhead, who, in his official report of 8 January 1901, said "I visited them as lately as 7th December and have the melancholy recollection that I was the last person to shake hands with them and bid them adieu".

13 Responses to "THE FLANNAN ISLES LIGHTHOUSE MYSTERY"

1 | Mike Dash

January 10, 2012 at 8:47 pm

The obvious answer to the question why the logbook entries might have been faked is: To spice up a magazine account of the mystery.

This is precisely how this happened. Since first writing about this mystery I've managed to trace this part of the account back to its source, an American pulp magazine of the 1920s called "True Strange Stories". The editor of that title admitted in his autobiography to spending under half an hour researching each story, adding: "All I needed for a "true" story were a few unusual facts, a name or two, a place or two, and, if possible, a picture to give a semblance of believability."

2 | britcitresident
April 19, 2013 at 1:21 pm

Personally I think that one of the lighthouse keepers may have gone mad and killed the other two, before killing himself. Although obviously that wouldn't explain the lack of bodies.

Whatever happened the Flannan Isle Mystery never fails to send a shiver up my spine. I would love to go and visit the lighthouse one day.

amberpadam
February 10, 2015 at 7:12 pm

Yeah, it gives me the creeps too.
I would also love to visit Flannan Isle one day too.

3 | Patrick McReary (@JCVideoGameVids)
August 2, 2013 at 7:48 pm

As History Channel would put it, "IT WAS ALIENS!".

Of course, the Flannan Isles will always be a mystery, and it definitely makes for great reading as well. Something about being isolated in a dark place, something about the bad weather, it's something that always ends chills up my spine.

4 | Saison 15 (1977-1978) / 15-01 Horror of Fang Rock | Les chroniques du Docteur – Doctor Who version classique March 7, 2014 at 7:52 pm

[…] de Wilfrid Fibson « the Flannan Isle » que le Docteur récite à la fin de l'arc et qui conte la disparition inexpliquée de l'équipage du phare de Flannan durant l'année 1900. Elle puise également dans la nouvelle « The Fog Horn » de Ray Bradbury et anticipe de peu […]

5 | Will Thomas
November 6, 2014 at 12:56 am

Aside from the nice little Doctor Who episode they mad out of this, it is a charming mystery that in all likelihood will never be solved…just the way we like them.

6 | richard householder (@riraho5)
September 23, 2015 at 2:28 pm

Interesting article. I've read a little about this over the years, but this was by far the most detailed. Do you believe the log entries are real?

sjhstrangetales
September 23, 2015 at 3:11 pm

I did at first, but then Mike Dash contacted me to say they were an invention of the tabloid press at the time, which sounds all too plausible! I suppose a part of me still wants to believe they were, as it all adds to the mystery.

7 | Christopher Sharrocks
December 10, 2015 at 3:12 am

I First learned of this mystery at a funeral. From a cousin of my mother whose funeral it was. My mothers maiden name was Ducat!
My mothers cousin told me of the mystery of their mysterious loss of their Grandfathers brother in a lighthouse. (their being; My mother & her Cousin)
I for the first time I have just read about this here which confirms the name James Ducat was recorded as senior keeper. Therefore, I am actually the great, great grandson of James Ducat's brother and directly related. My mothers surname changed when she married my father.

I would be interested to learn more from anyone wishing to discuss or share info. Email: chrissharrocks@me.com many thanks, CS

8 | Christopher Cain
March 29, 2016 at 8:56 pm

It was part of my job, back in the mid 80s to check to make sure that the Flannan islands lighthouse was lit each evening. Me and my colleagues would take binoculars and report back to Trinity House via HQ Northern Sector RAF Pitreavie Castle. I knew the story at the time and it was an eerie experience walking along the wooden floored West facing corridor at the LF Txer Station, RAF Aird Uig.

sjhstrangetales March 30, 2016 at 2:44 pm

Very interesting, thank you

9 | Rogue Waves: A Bolt from Blue Waters | Kemplon Engineering
June 21, 2016 at 1:01 pm

[…] to rogue waves again. Three keepers stationed at a lighthouse on a remote island near Scotland vanished in 1899. Damage to a metal box stored 30 meters above water and a huge rock that had moved from its […]

10 | 20-Most Mysterious Case Of People Disappearance | The Incredible Daddy
July 27, 2016 at 5:37 pm

[…] The Flannan Isles (also known as the Seven Hunters) are named after a 7th century Irish priest called St Flannan. Apart from the 70 years when the lighthouse was manned, the windswept islands

have always largely been uninhabited. The lighthouse was constructed in the 1890s on the island known as Eileen Mor (Big Isle). It took 4 years, and building work was continually hampered by the difficulties of safely landing supplies on the island, and the tempestuousness of the wild Atlantic Ocean. The lighthouse first went into operation on 7 December 1899. The island lighthouse was manned by a three-man team (Thomas Marshall, James Ducat, and Donald MacArthur), with a rotating fourth man spending time on shore. […]

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Man captures mysterious footage of 'ghost ship' - but what's the explanation?

10:00, 12 Oct 2016 Updated 10:00, 12 Oct 2016 By Kara O'Neill

mirror.co.uk



A man has captured spooky footage of a ' ghost ship ' sailing through the choppy waters of Lake Superior, in the US.

The clip, which was recorded near Michigan on Saturday, shows a shadowy image of what appears to be a gigantic ship moving through the water.

Jason Asselin was the man who caught the eerie spectre on camera, and admits he's puzzled as to the explanation.

Jason wrote alongside the video footage: "Saturday evening far off coast from Marquette, Michigan, appeared this mysterious ship that had to be gigantic!



YouTube / Jason Asselin

The ship was spotted in Lake Superior off the coast of Michigan

"Almost as if a ghost ship was showing itself to the world.

"Even it if was a ship, what could be that tall in these choppy waves?"

He told CBS Detroit: "Some people said it might be a mirage, but for that to happen, conditions would have to be perfect."

Jason's video has been viewed more than 380,000 times since Monday, when it was uploaded to YouTube .



YouTube / Jason Asselin

No one can explain the mysterious ship

One viewer wrote: "Jason, you heard of the Bannockburn? It's a ship that sank in the 1800s and has been spotted several times since."

Another added: "That is the coolest mirage I have seen in a long time."

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For Día de los Muertos, a beautiful Guatemalan kite festival honors the dead

mic.com

By Edna Rheiner
October 27, 2016

In Guatemalan culture, the Día de los Muertos — or Day of the Dead — is a time when the worlds of the living and the dead are believed to mesh together and spirits return to Earth from heaven. The celebration, which begins November 1, is also known as All Saints' Day, or Día de Todos los Santos.



For Día de los Muertos, a beautiful Guatemalan kite festival honors the dead

To celebrate Día de los Muertos, Guatemalans across the country pay visits to cemeteries, prepare a special dish called fiambre and, among other traditions, fly kites.

The Kite Festivals of Santiago and Sumpango — both in the Sacatepéquez region — are about honoring the dead and communicating with them, but locals also compete to see who has the most beautiful kite and which of them can stay flying the longest. There are prizes for best design, but for the winners, the cheers and admiration of the crowd are rewarding enough.

These photos were taken in recent years in Sumpango, where the Kite Festival has been celebrated for nearly 40 years. According to Julio Asturias from the Committee of Sumpango, 36 groups are already onboard to fly their kites at this year's festival.



For Día de los Muertos, a beautiful Guatemalan kite festival honors the dead

"Barilletes gigantes" at the 2014 Kite Festival in Sumpango, Guatemala
Source: Edna Rheiner/Mic



For Día de los Muertos, a beautiful Guatemalan kite festival honors the dead

2014's Kite Festival in Sumpango, seen from above
Source: Edna Rheiner/Mic

Known as "barilletes gigantes" in Spanish, the giant kites of Santiago and Sumpango are masterpieces that take great skill and patience to create.

Around two weeks before the first of November, preparations for the festivals begin. For young people, that means gathering to start making the huge kites — an age-old practice with roots in Ancient Mayan culture.



For Día de los Muertos, a beautiful Guatemalan kite festival honors the dead

The bamboo frame of a kite at the 2011 festival in Sumpango
Source: Edna Rheiner/Mic

A standard barillete gigante is made of cloth and paper tied to a bamboo frame, and features a colorful design — usually with a religious or folkloric theme. The kites' diameters generally range between 24 and 30 meters, with some as big as 36 meters.



For Día de los Muertos, a beautiful Guatemalan kite festival honors the dead

A barillete gigante is lifted upward in 2011.
Source: Edna Rheiner/Mic

When the kites are finally finished, they're transported to the festival sites and hoisted upward toward heaven, in memory of deceased relatives. In Santiago and Sumpango, the festivals take place near cemeteries.

Due to their massive size, the barilletes gigantes don't fly. Instead, the vibrant masterpieces stand upright on the ground.

On the sidelines, revelers make smaller kites for flying purposes.

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The Franklin County Wolf Monument

wordpress.com

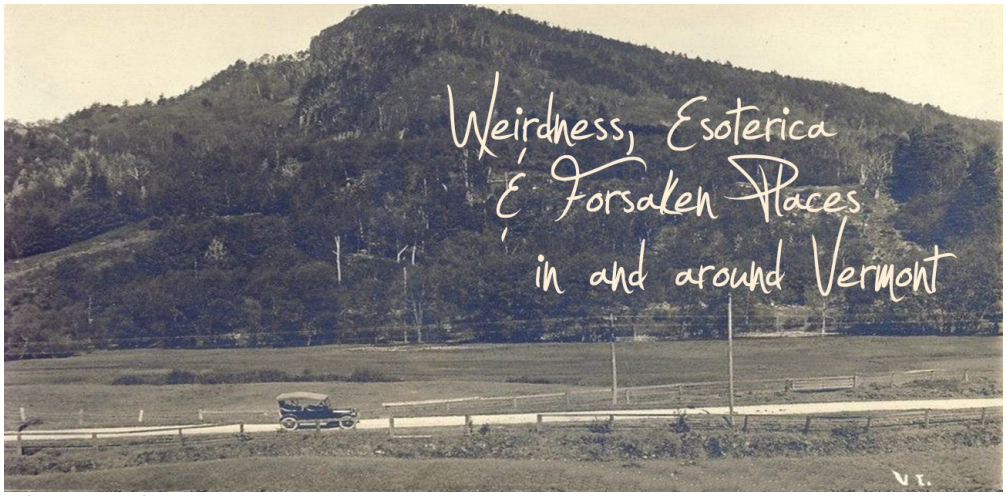
https://urbanpostmortem.wordpress.com/2016/10/03/the-franklin-county-wolf-monument/

Posted on October 3, 2016By Chad Abramovich

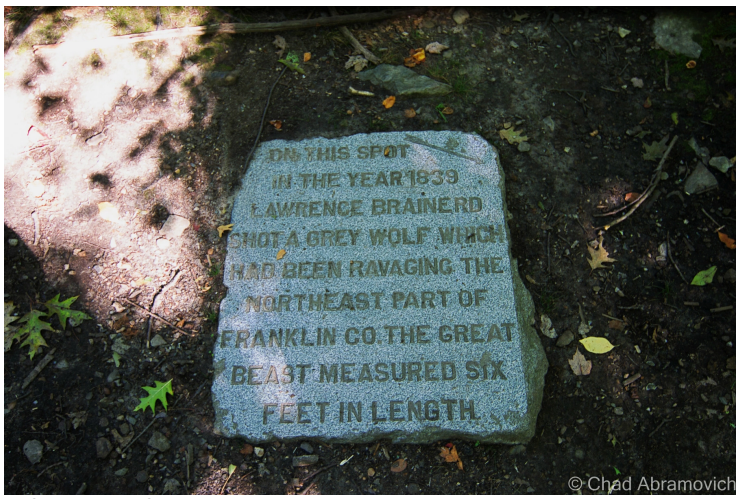
“Wait – there it is!” I shouted, pointing to the top of a long rock emergence that confined a rootsy trail between a steep descent down to more rocks and dead leaves. I hastily bushwacked off from the path, clambered up the small incline thick with lots of scratchy underbrush and got to a plateaued area at the top, and found what I had been searching for – the very camouflaged Franklin County wolf monument.

This boulder clumped pitch on Saint Albans’ Aldis Hill was apparently where the last gray wolf in Franklin County was seen in 1839. But instead of memorializing the wolf, it memorialized how it ended up. Dead. As my confused friend shuffled up after me, I let out a fulfilling “yes!” like I wasn’t still in ear shot of residential neighborhoods.

Logo



If you have found it – you might have scratched your name into the large boulder nearby with smaller rocks. Or on this tree, which someone decided should have a content face.



If you have found it – you might have scratched your name into the large boulder nearby with smaller rocks. Or on this tree, which someone decided should have a content face.

According to the inscribed story on the supine slab; the beast, 6 feet in length, had been ravaging in unidentified ways, the country around northeastern Franklin County until local businessman and politician Lawrence Brainerd had some sort of run-in with it, pursued it up the hill, and shot it, which inspired someone to then erect a pretty modest, somewhat macabre commemoration of the event. That person remains a mystery. People react to these sort of situations in different ways. Then, shooting a wolf was probably seen as a good riddance worthy of recognition, where currently, I’m sure the reactions would be social media spitfire. Still, the monument serves as a mark of distinction of the area, and makes me wonder what other secrets or conditions have long been buried?

The area around the monument is some of the hill’s wildest topography. It would be easy to envision having a run-in with a wolf up there, or maybe some other wild beast. Though I’m not sure how many Brainerd’s are left in the maple city, there is still a Brainerd Street today that runs upwards from North Main Street in the direction of the hill,

commemorating the obviously influential family. Although, it's disappointingly not marked with the city's signature white street signs emblazoned with green maple leaf silhouettes.

The monument is a local legend and cool piece of Franklin County obscura. Many don't know about it – which doesn't surprise me. And if you do, you fall into two camps; you know where it is, or don't. And if you do, it's a pretty hard thing to give directions to. On my second time hiking up the hill, it was July and come down humidity, I was trampling through the heat and trying to discern my friend's text message directions, only to walk back down the hill no longer caring if I found it or not and just wanting to sit in some air conditioning for a while.

Plenty of others have tried to find it – but it's a challenge. Trust me, this was my third time on the hill, which is surprisingly steep and tredded with a network of overlapping trails that can screw up a mental compass. Generally, if you use the hum of the interstate nearby, you can get a good orientation of where you are. But the monument is small, doesn't distinguish itself from the woods, and isn't really on the trailside.

I knew the Hard'ack ski area existed, a local rope tow operation on the east slope of the hill with both a devoted fan base and volunteer crew, because I grew up in Milton and used to go there as a kid, like lots of area kids did. But I wasn't aware that there were trails beyond Hard'ack, that lead up and all over Aldis Hill. And that's a shame, because once I found out just how to get up to the un-signed recreation area, I really liked it. Its terrain was rugged and wild, not what I was expecting for a little green rise that separates Saint Albans city from interstate 89.

Aldis Hill, or, the area that's not Hard'ack, was gifted to the city of Saint Albans in 1892 by the family that owned it, the Aldis's. The idea was to turn the rocky eminent into a recreation area for Saint Albans-ites. Somewhere on the 849-foot hill is a lookout, framed by old-growth trees that rewards the finder a pretty awesome view of the architecture of the city, and beyond looking out towards Saint Albans Bay. However, this was one of those Aldis Hill points of interest that I haven't been able to find yet. Seriously, there are a lot of trails here, and none of them are marked. But the very noticeable lack of signage is, in my opinion, another thing that makes this woodsy area so satisfying.

I was reading some great nostalgia from an article the *Saint Albans Messanger* wrote up, as one Franklin County resident recalled building forts, wrecking other kids forts, building dams in spring runoff streams, playing games, and having rock fights. That really brought back great memories of me, my brother and friends growing up and doing all of those things in the woods behind our suburban house in Milton, which are some of my fondest memories. It's great that Aldis Hill exists. If I was a kid, I'd definitely be playing in these woods.

I won't give out the location of the monument, because honestly, 3/4th of the fun was actually trying to find the damn thing myself. The wanting brought me exploring all over Aldis Hill, which in my opinion, is worth it. Who knows, you might find the cool stone cut staircase, the lookout, the monument, remnants of barbed wire fencing being consumed by trees, and rusting artifacts that somehow ended up in the woods on the hill.



dsc_0695_pe



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If you have found it – you might have scratched your name into the large boulder nearby with smaller rocks.



Or on this tree, which someone decided should have a content face.

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British man aims to swim Atlantic: From Senegal to Brazil

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press
CARLEY PETESCH
Associated PressNovember 13, 2016



Ben Hooper, 38, walks onto the beach before his swimming expedition to cross the Atlantic, in Dakar, Senegal, Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016. Ben Hooper has been planning to make the epic endeavour for more than three years to become the first person to swim the full 1,635 nautical miles from Senegal to Brazil. (AP Photo/Carley Petesch)

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Former British police officer Ben Hooper hopes to make history by swimming every mile of the Atlantic Ocean from Africa to South America. After more than three years of preparation, he set off on Sunday.

The 38-year-old walked down a beach in Dakar and into the Atlantic Ocean, launching a swim for 1,635 nautical miles, or nearly 2,000 land miles (3,200 kilometers), from Senegal to Brazil.

"This is for my daughter," said Hooper, who filled a water bottle with sand to keep for the 8-year-old who he said inspired the swim. "It's been a long time coming."

Flanked by two boats and a crew of less than a dozen, Hooper aims to be the first person to swim every mile of the Atlantic Ocean from continent to continent, stepping on land again in March.

He says he trained three years as he gathered a crew for the Big Blue, the main boat on which he will eat and sleep when he is not swimming for about eight hours each day through waters infested with sharks and jellyfish.

Water has loomed large in his life.

"I nearly drowned when I was 5 in a swimming pool in Belgium," Hooper told The Associated Press. "Ever since ... I've had this affinity with water. It was the calmest I've ever felt."

Hooper said he had a bout of depression about 3 1/2 years ago and decided to turn his life around for his daughter. So he looked to water.

"Nobody had swum a full ocean. More people have landed on the moon than have tried this, so at that point I thought maybe this is my calling," said Hooper. "If I can inspire myself, other people and raise money for charity, why not do it?"

Inspired by British explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, Hooper said he hopes to motivate others, especially children, to swim.

Funding for the expedition has taken time, and the launch was set back several times as various crew members dropped out and the boats faced mechanical issues.

"This will be a major achievement overall," said Nigel Taylor-Schofield, the captain of Big Blue. "If anybody can accomplish this, it would be Ben. He is very determined."

The crew, including a paramedic, will track the miles, and Hooper has said if he gets to Brazil with the help of currents, he will swim until he fulfills the full Atlantic mileage.

The challenges, be it marine life, dehydration, and more, will be vast, but Hooper says his biggest fear is letting the team and his daughter down. He'll listen to a playlist on customized earphones that he said will include eurotrash music, Eminem and The Script's "Hall of Fame." Hooper will also wear various gear that helps camouflage him from sharks, and a tracking device so supporters can follow his nearly five-month swim online.

Around 10:30 a.m. on the beach outside the Monaco Plage hotel in Dakar, Hooper and the crew were ready.

"See you in Brazil," he said, before eventually swimming off into the sunlit waters toward his goal.

___

http://www.swimthebigblue.com/

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Fugitive pig 'Kevin Bacon' tracked down by Canadian police

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Nov. 3, 2016 at 10:59 AM
Follow @oddnewsupi

DARTMOUTH, Nova Scotia, Nov. 3 (UPI) -- Police in Canada managed to track down an escaped pig in a local neighborhood before returning it to its owner.

Halifax Regional Police shared photos of Cst. Cody Schultz as he knelt down with the fugitive potbellied pig.

"So this happened yesterday...We were called to the Russell Street area of Dartmouth to help return 'Kevin Bacon,' a potbellied pig who had strayed from his home," police said.

Schultz told the CBC his encounter with "Kevin Bacon" was the first time he dealt with a pig on the job and he enjoyed the opportunity to have a laugh.

"We located him in the north-end area and he was happy to see us. We had a little fun with him there," he said. "We got a few pictures with him and off he went with his owner."

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Fukushima nuclear zone 'to become world's next bizarre tourist hotspot'

20:18, 24 Sep 2016 Updated 20:18, 24 Sep 2016 By Laura Connor

mirror.co.uk



Lack of information has made it hard to evaluate the Fukushima aftermath

The site of the Fukushima nuclear disaster is set to become a bizarre new tourist attraction, as people flock to visit the radioactive exclusion zone.

Just as tourists visited Chernobyl 25 years after the explosion at the Soviet-era nuclear reactor, the Fukushima Daiichi disaster zone is now attracting thousands of visitors.

But while Chernobyl happened more than 30 years ago, the Fukushima disaster was initiated by the tsunami following the Tōhoku earthquake in 2011.

Despite the risks involved in visiting the site, a number of companies are organising tours in the disaster area.



Barcroft Media

Inside the abandoned 'exclusion zone'
Smoke rises from the nuclear reactor

Hiroshi Miura, head of a company called NPO Nomado, has already started working as a tour guide for people visiting his home city of Minamisoma, located 16 miles north of the Fukushima nuclear plant.

The first project aimed at transforming the crippled area into a tourist attraction was presented to the Japanese authorities in 2012, only a year after the disaster.



The idea was put forward by philosopher Hiroki Azuma, the author of the Chernobyl Dark Tourism Guide, who said people should be allowed to see the process of the Fukushima plant's decontamination with their own eyes.

Eerie pictures from inside the radioactive area
Visitors will have to don protective suits until 2036

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He added that, by 2036, visitors should be able to approach the plant without the need to wear protective suits.

But Japanese authorities dismissed the idea, saying the word 'tourism' should never be applied to the catastrophe site.

But companies are still pressing on with their controversial tour guides – and it's a seriously lucrative enterprise.



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An inspection team at the site after the explosion
A number of cancer deaths are expected to be linked to the accident

Miura told Sputnik News : "In October 2012 I established a non-commercial organisation Nomada and continued my business by creating a '20 Kilometers Away From Fukushima-1' tour.

"By 2014, just by myself, I had over 5,000 clients. In 2015 other guides and volunteers started working with me, and over 10,000 people participated in our tours."



Lying completely untouched since March 2011, the city of Fukushima was evacuated suddenly after the east coast of Japan was devastated by a massive earthquake followed by a huge tsunami .

Towns and villages housing hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated as a major nuclear event was declared and a 12.5-mile no-go 'red zone' was put into place.

There have been no deaths linked to the radiation released during the accident, but the

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eventual number of cancer deaths is expected to be around 130-640 people.

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Funeral car impounded by gardai after road tax ‘passed away’ two years ago

10:21, 28 Oct 2016

thesun.ie



Main Image

Funeral car is taken off road over out-of-date tax disc

THIS funeral car was a “dead cert” to be towed as its tax disc died in 2014.

Gardai took to social media to share the bizarre snap earlier today — and said even hearses must follow the rules of the road.

They wrote on Facebook: “RIP Road Tax 2013-14 - passed away 2 yrs ago.

“It’s gone to a better place now...off the road! All vehicle must have tax/ins/nct. M3 C/Point.”

While the Garda Traffic Twitter account added: “Nobody knows the minute or hour when their number is up. ANPR would have finished it off eventually! Now that’s one ya don’t expect to see!”

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Not known

FWC still searching for monkey spotted loose near Hudson Beach

PASCO COUNTY –

baynews9.com



This rhesus monkey was spotted near Hudson Beach. Officials are warning people not to touch it. (FWC)

This rhesus monkey was spotted near Hudson Beach. Officials are warning people not to touch it. (FWC)

By Saundra Weathers, Reporter Last Updated: Thursday, October 27, 2016, 9:29 PM EDT

A rhesus monkey was recently spotted near Hudson Beach recently, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

- **Curiosity had some residents out Thursday looking for monkey**
- **Rhesus Macaque not native to Florida**
- **Seen the monkey? Call 888-404-3922**

Pictures of the rhesus macaque circulating online Thursday had some residents out searching for the animal.

"Curiosity kind of got the most of it, we wanted to come here and check it out," said Nicholas Johnson. "The monkey doesn't look that bad. Doesn't look vicious or anything."

Other people in the area who happened to see the monkey got a different impression.

"I just happened to come out of the garage, and I'm looking down the street and I'm going, 'Is that a dog, or is it a big cat?'" said Rollo Townsley, who spotted the monkey on his street on Leisure Beach, right across from Hudson Beach. "And then I thought, 'maybe it's a bobcat.' And then I thought, 'Wait a minute -- what is that?'"

"It was about three feet tall when it was sitting, and then it took off to the east and ran down beach boulevard," said Tom Applegate, who along with his wife also saw the rhesus macaque. "My wife actually went through the house to see where it went, and she said it was going fast down the street."

It's not known how the monkey ended up near Hudson Beach, because this particular kind is not native to Florida.

Of course, with a monkey on the loose, the jokes aren't far behind.

"Some people thought, 'well, there's a lot of monkeys that live in Leisure Beach,' but I think they were talking about their neighbors," said Applegate.

"I don't know, they'll probably say you better get that monkey off your back," said Townsley.

All jokes aside, FWC officials are warning people not to get near or touch the monkey or try to attract it, and that they should secure their trash.

Anyone who has seen it should call the Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-3922 or the the Exotic Species Hotline at 1-800-266-7883.

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The Gay Ghosts of Los Angeles

October 12, 2016Richard Carradine

Obviously, when dealing with historical figures, the subject of sexual orientation can never always be definite, so those listed below are the apparitions of personalities that are generally accepted as homosexual. For this reason, the ghosts of Rudolph Valentino, James Dean, and George Reeves did not make this list, even though there have been claims that they were (in life) secretly gay. I have, however, included ghosts of possible non-homosexuals, where their "homosexuality" is important to the ghost story (even if it may not be true).

13.) "The Man in Apt #2" – At a certain apartment complex on the north end of Silver Lake, there is a bathroom with a mirror that catches glimpses of a former occupant, a gay man who supposedly committed suicide in that room (when it was a closet). Although, he was not famous, and no one remembers his name, this spirit is included on this list to represent all the other unknown gay ghosts in our city. (This apartment building is near the intersection of Hyperion Ave and Rowena Ave)

12.) R. Gregory Stevens – This is the longtime friend of actress Carrie Fisher and politico for President Bush, who died in Fisher's Laurel Canyon home of an overdose, and then according to her appearance on "Celebrity Ghost Stories," haunted her house. He is worth including because not only is he one of this city's gay ghosts, but he is also something very rare in this town – a gay Republican. (This private residence is on the 8600 block of Lookout Mountain Ave., Laurel Canyon, Los Angeles)

11.) Ned Doheny/Ned Plunket – One (or both) haunts the Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills. Although it is pure speculation that these two were gay, their names are included on this list because most theories about their murder/suicide and cover-up revolve around the idea they were lovers, so their "gayness" is an important part of the tale people repeat, when talking about this haunting (The house is part of a public park at 905 Loma Vista Dr, Beverly Hills)

10.) James Whale – This openly gay film director (unusual for the 1930's) not only defined the way we think of Frankenstein's monster, but also essentially created the Gothic "haunted house" movie with his feature "The Old Dark House." So, is it any wonder that this horror pioneer would haunt his former residence in the Palisades? (This private residence is at 788 S. Amalfi Dr., Pacific Palisades)

9.) Albert Dekker – The ghost of this rather obscure actor is said to linger around his former hang out, Boardner's Bar in Hollywood. Although not many people know his name, he had one of the most bizarre deaths this town has ever seen (which is really saying something). He was found handcuffed, blindfolded, gagged with a noose around his neck and curse words written on his body.



dohenyhomicide

Some accounts claim he had hypodermic needles sticking out of him.. The police classified his death as accidental. (Boardner's is at 1652 N Cherokee Ave, Hollywood)

8.) Ramon Novarro – His spirit is said to be in residence at his former hillside home, which was also the site of his murder. Two small time hustlers beat him to death (Novarro died from choking on his own blood), while trying to extract information about a supposed large sum of money hidden somewhere on the property (that was never found). Does this "treasure" really exist? Does Novarro guard this property from the after-life against would be thieves? (This private residence is at 3110 Laurel Canyon Drive, Los Angeles)

7.) Gilmore Brown – This is not meant to be too stereotypical, but "gay" and "the theater" are two concepts that (for better or worse) many would say go together. So, it would make sense that since playhouses generally have a ghost story or two, there would be one locally with a gay ghost story. Such is the case with the historic Pasadena Playhouse and the ghost of its homosexual founder. (This active theater is at 39 S El Molino Ave., Pasadena)

6.) Christopher Isherwood – Obviously, there is no way to do a list like this without mentioning the ghost of one of the great openly gay writers/screenwriters of the twentieth century. After co-writing the best film satire of the death industry, "The Loved One," he apparently belittled death once more by remaining on Earth to haunt his former home in Santa Monica Canyon. (This private residence is at 333 E Rustic Rd, Santa Monica)

5.) Clifton Webb – At Hollywood Forever Cemetery, with so many famous people buried there, so many great tragic tales, and so many possibilities, isn't it interesting that the predominant ghost at this famous graveyard, is the gay actor most famous for appearing in the film noir, "Laura." Hollywood Forever is also said to be haunted by the possibly gay Rudolph Valentino. (This memorial park is at 6000 Santa Monica Blvd, Los Angeles)

4.) Laurence Austin – His lover believed that if something were to happen to Austin, that he would inherit Austin's greatest possession, Hollywood's Silent Movie Theater. A robbery was staged, and Austin was murdered in the lobby. Although his scheme was to get Austin out of the picture, it seems to have backfired, since Austin's spirit is said to have remained there (watching over things), and continues to stay there. (This active theater is at 611 N Fairfax Ave, Los Angeles)

3.) "Ralf M. Walker"- The mysterious haunted "Houdini Mansion" is an enigma in this town. Although, some believe its ghost is Harry Houdini, his connection to the site seems to be in name only. The story most commonly told (and perhaps this is just a story) is that the "male figure" (some mistake for Houdini) is actually the home's original owner, who it is said to have murdered his male "ward" here after a "lover's quarrel," and then used his wealth to cover it up. (This private residence is at 2398 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, Hollywood, Los Angeles)

2.) Paul Bern – Like the ghosts of the "Houdini Mansion" and Greystone Mansion mentioned previously, most retellings of the suicide (or was it murder) of Paul Bern discuss the possibility/probability of him being gay, because of his cryptic suicide note. The house he haunts is also notable because of its super-natural connection to the Mansion murders. It was here that victim

Sharon Tate was warned by a bloody apparition of her own bloody fate. (This private residence is at 9860 Easton Dr, Benedict Canyon, Beverly Hills)

1.) Montgomery Clift – The reason that Monty, and his bugle-playing spirit (disturbing the sleep of guests), is at the top of this list is because of the real estate he occupies. Like most things in Los Angeles, It's all about location, location, location. Next to the Queen Mary, the Roosevelt Hotel is probably the most famous haunted place in La-La-Land with its ghost stories mentioned in most tourist guide books. So, who haunts possibly the most famous haunted place in our city? The apparition of a famous gay actor playing with his horn. (This hotel is at 7000 Hollywood Blvd, Hollywood, Los Angeles)

October 12 @ 9:15 pm - 11:45 pm



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Genitalia-shaped mailbox in Florida gives new meaning to junk mail

abcactionnews.com

Weather Traffic All Sections

Michael Cadigan

2:22 PM, Nov 4, 2016



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ENGLEWOOD, Fla. - A Florida woman's uniquely shaped mailbox is turning heads in her neighborhood.

It's a ... well, how about we have those who live on the street have a crack at describing it first.

"A mailbox, mounted in a vertical...vertically aligned sculpture," says Paul Zecchino.

"Large, round, cylinder statue that resembles a piece of anatomy," says Robert Skidmore.

"No mistaking it for a dolphin or whale or other unique Florida art," says Zecchino.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about this phallic mailbox? The woman's son gave it to her as a gift.

"I just told her that I had a surprise for her," says Gary Winthrop.

"I thought I was getting a Harley or a car, and that's what I got," says his mother, Sue. But she wasn't angry. "I can't be mad ... it's from my son."

She still laughs when she's sees the new mailbox, which was custom ordered and carved out of solid wood by a local artist.

It certainly sticks out more than the other run-of-the-mill mailboxes in their East Englewood neighborhood. "It's about six feet, six inches; weighs in at about 500 pounds."

Although some neighbors have been flipping out about it. "Some of the neighbors put real estate magazines in her mailbox to basically tell her to move and give her some dirty looks," says Winthrop.

But what about the person that is supposed to put mail in the mailbox? Gary recorded video of the mailman arriving at the new mailbox. "Is this legal? Can I have this up?" Gary asked. "I guess so, I don't think there's anything wrong with it," replied the mailman.

Even though Gary put it up just a few days ago, it already has become a landmark. "As part of my weekly forced marches through this neighborhood, I use that as a homing beacon to determine my position and chart my course.," jokes Zecchino.

But it's safe to say after Gary's latest gift, he doesn't have to go out of his way with the holidays fast approaching. "I don't think he needs to get me anything. This is enough for a while," says Sue.

Gary says he will keep trying to cook up artistic ways to push the envelope and get people talking.

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Moon Lake? Mohn Lake? Geographer probes mystery of lake name

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press October 30, 2016

KALISPELL, Mont. (AP) — A Montana lake that residents want to name may already have a title.

John and Sharon Ramsey's quest to label the lake so that it could be stocked with fish led two people to come forward with options that they each say are the original, reported the Missoulian (http://bit.ly/2eRWp3Q).

About six decades of maps from the U.S. Geological Survey carry no name for the lake, which partially sits on the couple's property.

Montana State Library geographer Gerry Daumiller started looking into the issue after the two proposed Lone Coyote Lake as the moniker to mirror Lone Coyote Trail, the road where they live.

One person who came forward said the lake is already named after the nearby Moon Lake Trial.

Another says Mohn Lake carries the name of the man who owned the surrounding property from 1898 to 1937.

Daumiller is asking anyone with information about the two names to contact him.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names decides these proposals.

The Ramseys said Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks initially told them the lake couldn't be stocked with fish without a name. Agency administrative supervisor Jannice Richardson, however, said the Ramseys had already proposed Lone Coyote Lake when they learned there was a one-time stocking permit available for unnamed lakes.

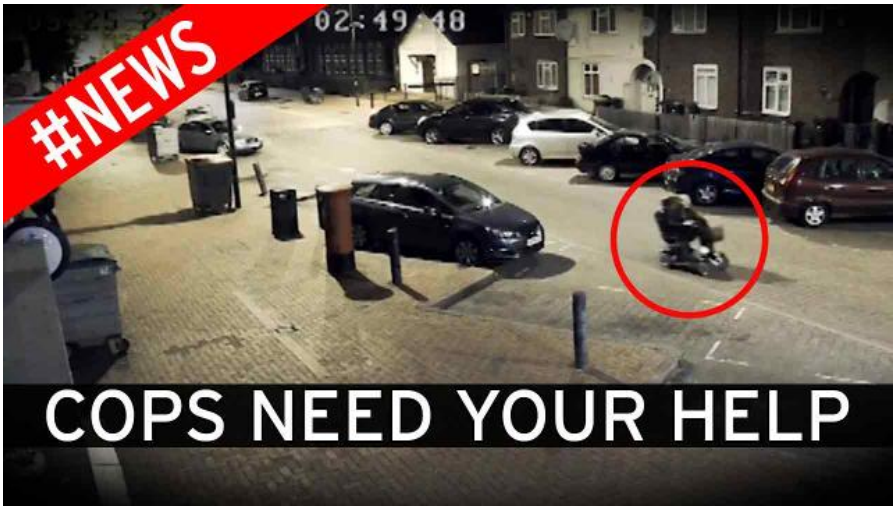
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Information from: Missoulian, http://www.missoulian.com

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10:16, 22 Sep 2016 Updated 13:12, 22 Sep 2016 By Kara O'Neill dailyrecord.co.uk

Thieves break into pharmacy to steal cash from till - make getaway on mobility scooter



Thieves who broke into a pharmacy to steal cash from the till had a rather bizarre getaway vehicle - a mobility scooter .

Detectives from Barking and Dagenham borough investigating burglaries at two pharmacies have issued CCTV footage of four men they wish to identify and speak to in connection with the incident.

On Wednesday, August 10, police were called at around 3pm to a report of a burglary at Paks Cosmetic Centre in Heathway, Dagenham.

The burglary was reported to have occurred at some point between 1:37am and 1:48am on August 9. The security shutters were damaged and cash was taken.



Met Police

Detectives are investigating two incidents at pharmacies in London

A similar incident with the same four suspects was reported on May 25 at Kry BA Chemists in Heathway, Dagenham.

CCTV from Kry BA Chemists caught the moment that two men walked over to the front of the shop and, using a metal bar, were able to dent the shutters and gain entry to the premises.

A cash till was taken out of the store and given to a man on a mobility scooter who was then able to travel quickly away from the store.

The men allegedly stole a cash till

Four suspects were captured on the CCTV .

Police said: "'Suspect 1' [image ref 223669] is described as a white man of medium build with a dark beard wearing a black cap, blue top with writing, black tracksuit bottoms, black trainers and light coloured gloves.



Met Police

"'Suspect 2' [image ref 223700] is described as a white man with a bald head, wearing dark clothing and driving a dark coloured mobility scooter.

"'Suspect 3' [image ref 223701] is described as a white man wearing a dark blue hooded top and white trainers.



Met Police

One made a getaway on mobility scooter

"'Suspect 4' [image ref 223702] is described as a white man wearing a dark grey hooded top, blue jeans and white trainers."

Police are keen to hear from anyone who may recognise the four men shown on CCTV or who may have witnessed either of the two burglaries.

Anyone who may be able to assist the investigation should call officers from Barking and Dagenham CID via 101. To remain anonymous call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

TheScottishDailyRecord

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Is THIS a ghost girl wearing Georgian-period clothing as she lurks outside an old castle?

express.co.uk

express_logo

A BUTCHER has revealed a picture of what he claims is the ghost of a little girl wearing Georgian-period clothing and bonnet in the grounds of a 900-year-old castle.

PUBLISHED: 00:00, Fri, Sep 23, 2016 | UPDATED: 10:37, Fri, Sep 23, 2016



MERCURY

Mark Whitaker, 34, had visited Skipton Castle, Yorks, with his partner Amanda Ledgar, who was pregnant at the time, and had been snapping away like usual all day.

It was only when he got back home in Colne, Lancashire, that the then dad-to-be and now dad-of-one, noticed the three-foot tall ghostly figure walking by the castle.

The image shows a clear figure in a white floor length period dress and a bonnet that appears to float where her head would be - though the eerie child has no visible arms or neck.

Mr Whitaker claims the image still sends a shiver down his spine whenever he looks at it but has now revealed it to see what others think.

Mr Whitaker said: "It actually sent a shiver down my spine as I didn't see it [in the picture] until I transferred it to my computer.

"I think it's a ghost of a little girl of some kind, especially with what she is wearing. She has a dress and bonnet that I think is like what they would wear two or three hundred years ago.



"It has created quite a stir [with those who have seen it]. Obviously with a picture like that there is lots of speculation about whether I have Photoshopped it.

"But there is no physical shape [outside of the clothes], no arms or face appears.

"It looks like she is walking away from the picture past a wall that is only about two or three feet high so she must be an infant. There would have been high infant mortality rates in that period.

MERCURY

"But I don't even own Photoshop or have access to it and I don't know how to use it even if I did. Other people have said it is a spirit. Everyone I have shown it to have been quite taken aback by it.

The couple had decided to visit Skipton Castle, built in 1090 by a Norman baron, as they were looking for a fun day out.

Mr Whitaker said: "Neither of us had been to the castle since we were in primary school and had fond memories.

"I'm a keen photographer so I took my camera with me. Amanda was pregnant at the time so I had wandered off on my own to look around.

"It wasn't until I got home that I realised what was in the image."



MERCURY

Mr Whitaker put the image in black and white as he liked the way it looked like that but sadly saved over the original file with this version.

Despite taking the picture in July 2014, after initially showing it to friends and family Mark forgot about the image but decided to speak out about it now.

Mr Whitaker said: "It creeps me out, it really does still [creep me out] just looking at it. Amanda always finds it creepy too."

Saturday, 24th September 2016

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WATCH: Ghost hunters believe this footage shows ghoul girl stalking pub where she died

express.co.uk

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WATCH: Ghost hunters believe this footage shows ghoul girl stalking pub where she died

DOES this spooky video show the ghost of a seven-year-old girl haunting the historic pub where she died?

PUBLISHED: 10:43, Mon, Oct 31, 2016 | UPDATED: 10:58, Mon, Oct 31, 2016

The GSI Family caught what they believe is their best paranormal sighting yet while spending the night at The Fox Inn, a 300-year-old pub in Guisborough, Cleveland.

In the footage, the paranormal investigators pan a night vision camera around a room of the pub, capturing what appears to be a small black figure which walks to the left of a lit area before vanishing.

And medium Neil Cook, who discovered the spooky sight while going through the footage days later, believes it is the spirit of a little girl called Jennifer who died outside the pub in a tragic accident in the late 1800s.

Ex-bouncer and father-of-one Mr Cook, from Saltburn-by-the-Sea, North Yorks, said: "I do believe what we saw was Jennifer's spirit.

"Sometimes a spirit wants to show themselves and tell their story because they are stuck on earth in limbo.

"Paranormal investigation is a history lesson and I think Jennifer just wanted to give us this history lesson and tell us the full story of the events of her life.

"I was absolutely blown away when I saw the footage, we all were. We have spent years looking for this kind of intelligent response.

"After I have listened to a spirit's story I always try to send them off towards the light and tell them they do not have to be here, now their story is told they can move on to a better place."

Mr Cook and his team, GSI Family: West Yorks and North East, first visited The Fox Inn in June last year after landlord Michael Crane asked them to investigate guests' complaints of unexplained activity and feelings of sadness in one of the pub's hotel rooms.

Former security worker Mr Cook knew Mr Crane, 23, from previously working the doors at the historic coaching inn, which was built in the late 1700s.

In the hotel room, Mr Cook said he was shown something traumatic had happened before witnessing the spirit of the pub's former housekeeper in the 1890s, Margaret, attacked in that room in a violent struggle.



M CRANE LTD • MERCURY



GSI FAMILY • MERCURY

On the stairs outside the room he said he sensed a small girl, seven-year-old Jennifer, who he believes was Margaret's daughter and would sit waiting for her mother while she carried out her duties.

The team placed electronic voice phenomenon (EVP) recorders all over the pub and at the end of the night were in the bar area discussing Margaret and Jennifer when the equipment picked up what they believe is Jennifer's voice saying 'mother'.

GSI Family returned to the pub this summer and when Mr Cook touched the stone steps outside the inn - an original historic feature there to allow guests to mount horses or enter carriages - he claims he felt a crushing feeling in his head and torso.

Mr Cook thinks Jennifer was playing on these steps while waiting for her mother when she fell and was trapped between the inn's wall and a passing coach, suffering injuries which killed her.

Later the same evening at about 8.30pm, the ghost hunters were in an upstairs stairwell when they claim they witnessed unexplained flashing light coming from downstairs so Mr Cook and investigator Shane Corbett, 32, went downstairs to take a closer look.

Mr Corbett panned a hand-held night vision camera around and the pair did not notice anything at the time but later spotted what appears to be a black figure walking across the room lit up by a green fire escape light behind a window.

They believe this is footage of Jennifer herself.

Middlesbrough-born Mr Cook, a full-time psychic, said: "When Shane and I went downstairs to investigate the light anomalies I was taking to him about Jennifer and I could feel her energy running back and forth in the bar area.

"We didn't see her at the time because Shane was looking around the room rather than through the lens.

"But over the next couple of days when we were going through the camera footage we realised Jennifer had shown herself on the camera.

"Shane and I were the only people in that room and the green light visible is glow from the pub foyer's fire escape light in the background.



GSI FAMILY • MERCURY

"It can't be one of our shadows because the light would have had to be behind us. There is no explanation, whatever it was was actually within the room.

"I think the light anomalies were Jennifer wanting to bring us down."

Landlord Mr Crane, who took over The Fox Inn aged just 21, said: "I personally am not a believer but there were a couple of things that night - like when we saw those big flashes of light, no one knew how to explain that.

"You can see something in the footage, a dark shadow.

"Guests had reported things in one of the hotel rooms Neil investigated - lights turning on and off and a cup from the bathroom appearing in the middle of the floor."

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Haunted Grounds: Bonaventure Cemetery and the Ghost of Gracie Watson | The Lineup

the-line-up.com

Don't take a gift from Little Gacie's grave ... or her life-like headstone might cry tears of blood.

By Gary Sweeney



Savannah's Bonaventure Cemetery is known for its lush scenery and striking monuments to the dead. Yet there is one particular headstone that stops visitors in their tracks. Surrounded by a long iron fence, sitting pensively with her right hand resting on a tree stump is the statue of a little girl.

Her name is Gracie Watson, also known as Little Gracie.



Photo: Georgia Archives

She was the only child of Wales (W.J.) and Margaret Frances Watson. Wales took over management of the luxurious Pulaski Hotel in the 1880s, though the Watsons found themselves largely ignored by the city's upper class. Margaret longed to integrate herself into the community and began giving away food and drinks at their hotel. Soon, the family's social status improved. Numerous parties were held at the Pulaski, to which Gracie was often invited.

The little girl charmed guests with her loveable personality, taking on the role of an adorable hostess. When she grew tired of mingling with the adults, Gracie would often slip away to play beneath the back stairwell. Her disappearing act became a running joke with the partygoers, who would ask aloud "Where's Gracie?" as a way of acknowledging the lateness of the hour.

Then, just two days before Easter in 1889, Gracie Watson died of pneumonia. She was six years old. Wales and Margaret were inconsolable; a grief-stricken Margaret claimed that she could still hear Little Gracie laughing and playing under the back staircase. Soon there after, Wales moved his wife into the newly-opened DeSoto Hotel to escape their painful memories. But over the years, different staff members insisted that Gracie's voice could still be heard near the stairs. Other staff members refused to go into the basement due to the ominous sound of low moaning and clanking



Photo: Dizzy Girl / Flickr [CC]

metal.

Related: 9 Strange Graves From Around the World

Wales Watson, in a final tribute to his daughter, hired sculpture John Walz to carve a life-sized monument of Gracie using a photograph as a reference. The finished work became the marker of her grave in Bonaventure Cemetery. It is said to be eerily accurate all the way down to the shape of her mouth.



Photo: Dizzy Girl / Flickr [CC]

And as the years passed, tales of Gracie's life—and her haunting gravestone—grew.

Visitors to Gracie's grave often leave toys and objects for her to enjoy. Some say Gracie's statue cries tears of blood if these gifts are removed. Numerous witnesses have claimed to see what they perceived to be a real girl in a white dress skipping through the cemetery grass before vanishing into thin air. Others have seen Little Gracie playing in Johnson Square, a public space near the Pulaski Hotel's former location. At least one person has seen a young girl staring from the window of the building at the corner of Bryan and Bull Street, where the Pulaski stood until it was demolished in 1957.



Photo: Tim Bounds / Flickr [CC]

In the spring of 2002, a Savannah tour guide led a group past the Pulaski's former site and began to tell Gracie's story. Suddenly she noticed an unfamiliar four-story structure reflected in the window of the building she faced. The guide spun around but saw no such building. She continued to see the same reflection in other buildings until she finished Gracie's story. Later, after seeing a historic photo of the Pulaski Hotel, the tour guide went pale and confirmed it was the reflection she had seen.

Related: Lady in White: the Haunted Burial Grounds of Union Cemetery

Gracie Watson's grave is one of the most heavily trafficked in Bonaventure Cemetery. The iron fence was specifically added to prevent damage to the

sculpture. Yet if the aforementioned sightings are to be believed, Gracie Watson herself is also watching over her resting place.



Photo: Dominic Casario / Flickr [CC]

So, if you are ever in Savannah, Georgia and decide to visit the beautiful, 160-acre grounds of Bonaventure Cemetery, keep your eyes and ears open for a little girl in Victorian clothing. She may just be coming out to play.

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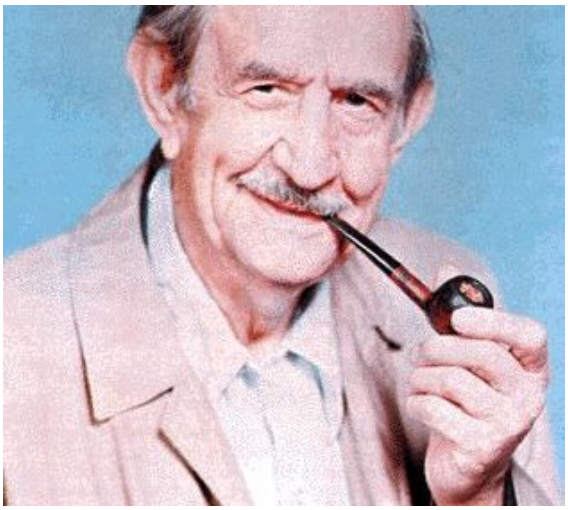
chinese

The Strange Case of Victor Kilian and the Ghost of the Chinese Theatre

October 11, 2016

When two octogenarian actors died within a week of each other in March, 1979, it could have been seen as coincidence. That both actors, Charles Wagenheim and Victor Kilian, had acted in the same episode of “All In the Family” would have only seemed slightly eerie, but not terribly unusual. That both were bludgeoned to death inside their respective Hollywood apartments, and the tragedies become outright creepy.

Wagenheim, 83, was an established actor possibly best known for playing the assassin in Alfred Hitchcock’s “Foreign Correspondent.” On March 6, 1979, a nurse caring for Wagenheim’s invalid wife called police to report she’d left the apartment for a short time to do laundry, and on returning found Wagenheim dead. Two months later, police arrested the nurse, who determined she’d bludgeoned Wagenheim with a table leg after he confronted her about checks he believed she’d stolen. She was sentenced to 8 years in prison for manslaughter.



Kilian’s homicide remains unsolved. On March 11, just five days after Wagenheim was killed, the 81 year old actor was also found beaten to death in the Lido Apartments, where he lived alone. The building is located two miles almost exactly due east of Wagenheim’s home.

According to the next day’s LA Times, Kilian “appeared to be preparing a late night snack when he was killed.” A detective told them the apartment was “found locked in such a way as to suggest the assailant might have entered with a passkey. Robbery is a possible motive.” Some believe Kilian had met a man at a nearby bar, and was killed after inviting the man up to his apartment.

Detective Steve Hodel, who handled the Wagenheim crime scene, told the Times the police had looked into, and dismissed, and possible connection between the two homicides. It bares noting that Hodel became famous years later by writing a book claiming his own father was the Black Dahlia

killer, and after that became a best seller, wrote another book claiming his father was also the Zodiac Killer.

As if Kilian hadn't enough tragedy in his life, he had previously endured being a victim of the Hollywood blacklist, and before this, lost an eye while shooting a fight scene in a John Wayne film. The life long thespian gained notoriety as "The Fernwood Flasher" on the series "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," living out his final days walking Hollywood Boulevard and the neighborhood. And this is where numerous reports claims he still wanders to this day.

As magician and ghost expert Tom Ogden writes in Haunted Hollywood, "The trail may have grown cold for police, but apparently Kilian hasn't stopped trying to find his own killer." Ogden, among many others, report Kilian's spirit can be seen often wandering the forecourt of the Chinese Theatre.

Bill Hardesty wrote a blog post about moving into the Lido Apartments with his family shortly after Kilian's murder. Even as an 11 year old he was fascinated with both the case and subsequent ghost story, and put a nice cherry on it:

I came to realize that the benefit of ghost stories about Victor Kilian was to kind of keep his memory alive. I'd learned that in this town full of glamorous distraction and occasionally violent crime, sometimes a good ghost story could be the only way to do just that.

Sources:

Lindgren, Kris. "Nurse Arrested in Slaying of Actor, 84." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* May 26, 1979.

"Elderly Actor Beaten to Death." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* Mar 12, 1979.

"Police Checking Possible Link in Actor Slayings." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* Mar 13, 1979.

"Nurse Sentenced to 8-Year Term in Slaying of Actor." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File),* Jan 29, 1980.

October 12 @ 9:15 pm - 11:45 pm

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Is this a ghost standing in the middle of a zebra crossing?

14:25, 20 Sep 2016 Updated 14:36, 20 Sep 2016 By Kara O'Neill

mirror.co.uk

'Ghost' of young girl stands in the middle of zebra crossing as car drives 'right through her body'



Has a 'ghost' been caught on this CCTV camera?

CCTV cameras have appeared to capture the moment a ghost of a young girl materialises in the middle of a zebra crossing - as a car drives right through her body.

The surveillance images show the spectre emerge out of nowhere, first as a suspicious shadow - before the picture suddenly becomes much more clear.

As she stands in the middle of the road, a car approaches, completely oblivious to the bizarre spectre, and appears to drive right through the girl's body.

It is believed that the eerie apparition was spotted in Paseo de la Reforma, in Mexico City at 2.20am on September 18.



Yes, I'm convinced I'm not sure - but I believe in ghosts No way

The ghost appears to materialise from nowhere

Bizarrely, the strange image only appears to have been caught on one of the security cameras.

The video has now been uploaded to YouTube where it has been viewed more than 359,500 times .

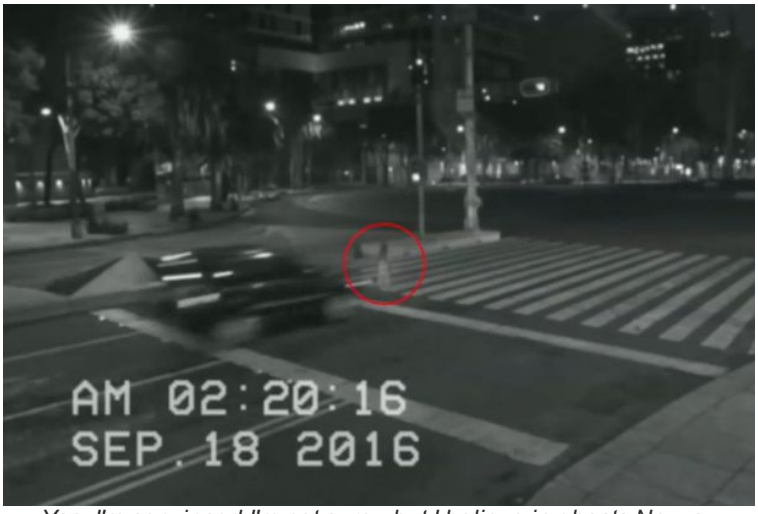
The car appears to drive straight through the ghost girl's body

According to viewers, several people have witnessed the same phenomenon.

But other YouTube users were slightly more cynical. One wrote: "Explanation 1: A spirit, entity or ghost manifests itself in one of the busiest streets in the city and no one has noticed, no doubt, because this entity comes from an alternate dimension.

"Explanation 2: The video is fake or has been superimposed on a real video."

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Yes, I'm convinced I'm not sure - but I believe in ghosts No way

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Ghosthunters photobombed by 'phantom' at former Victorian orphanage

13:12, 7 Nov 2016 Updated 15:33, 7 Nov 2016 By Helen Le Caplain

mirror.co.uk

Ghosthunters photobombed by 'phantom' while taking group picture at former Victorian orphanage



Mercury Press

The group posed for a picture ahead of their ghost-hunting expedition at a former Victorian orphanage

A group of ghosthunters got a fright when they looked at a picture taken during an exploration of a former Victorian orphanage and spotted a figure they didn't recognise in the line-up.

Phil Barron got his 32-strong ghost-hunting team together for a photograph in the old dining room at Newsham Park Hospital in Liverpool, Merseyside, ahead of the expidition.

It was only when he uploaded the snap to his group's Facebook page that people began commenting that they could see an eerie corpse-like face of a woman smiling at the camera.

Phil, 45, said: "At the beginning of the night I got everyone together in the old dining room and took a picture, like I always do, which goes on the Haunted Happenings Facebook page for people to tag themselves in and comment on.



Mercury Press Mercury Press

The eerie face of a woman appears in front of a man in the picture

"I took the snap and then put my phone away and during the break three hours later I sent it over to the office to be uploaded and thought nothing more of it.

"It was only the following day when I was woken by a flurry of instant messages and saw the number of comments on the post I had a proper look at the photo.

"There's been no Photoshop work - I just lightened the picture a little as it was quite dark and sent it over."

Phil said that despite going on such expeditions for the last 12 years he still gets a thrill from going on tours like this one, which they did at Halloween.

The Haunted Happenings paranormal team host Phil Baron took the picture and posted it on Facebook

Phil said: "I'm very lucky go to lots of places and experience different things.

"People think that we are immune to it but I get just as excited and apprehensive when something happens that you just can't explain.

"I've seen shadows walking around people, seen a glass move on a Ouija board I've heard knocks and bangs that are really loud when people aren't there.

"I've never actually seen a full apparition - I think that's the holy grail for most people.



Mercury Press

"I've no idea what it is - but I'm very interested to find out."

The orphanage dates back to the Victorian era and was opened in 1874 to support and educate the orphans of British seamen.


Mercury Press

The group were exploring Newsham Park Hospital in Liverpool, Merseyside, which dates back to 1874

Legend has it that conditions there were harsh and cruel there and after being converted into a hospital it's now home to a maze of corridors, wards, accommodation blocks, chapel and even a morgue.

Phil said: "We had a very active evening that night. During table tipping, where you ask the spirit to move the table, there was movement, guests felt things touching them and the Ouija board had activity too."

Founder of Haunted Happenings Hazel Ford said she was shocked to see what appears to be a ghostly figure standing in the middle of the picture.

Hazel said: "If someone can de-bunk it and prove what's caused this to happen I'm not going to argue with them.

"I'm not prepared to say it is paranormal or not at this stage - we just don't know.

"We've stripped it down to prove it's not been edited.

"We've emailed everyone who attended that night but no-one's come forward to say it's them.
"Some suggested it could be a skull on someone's t-shirt but we don't think it's that either.

"The size of the face is totally out of proportion to everyone else in the picture. Lots of things about it don't add up, it's really strange.

"Fundamentally I would like to know what the photo shows and that it's not just some poor lady who looks a bit ill.

"To all those saying it's Photoshop I can categorically assure you it's not - we've no interest in doing so."

DailyMirror

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A Ghostly Piano at Blackburn Telephone Exchange

lancashirefolk.com

Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history

Posted onSeptember 21, 2016



blackburn-telephone-exchange

Blackburn Telephone Exchange is a relatively modern building but it has long been regarded as haunted; strange noises have disturbed night-shift workers and the sounds of piano-playing and heavy footfalls have been heard. Piano-playing? How could this possibly be?

The site was once occupied by the Grand Theatre, built in 1880 and holding an audience of three thousand. In the early 1930s, management of the Theatre was taken over by William Murray, who boasted involvement in launching the career of one Charlie Chaplin. After William died his son Roy became manager, but like so many theatres the Grand had to close in 1956, the advent of cinema and TV tolling its death knell.

Even before the building was adapted for use as a Telephone Exchange, there were rumours that the building was haunted. Piano-playing would sometimes be heard and stage curtains drew across the stage on their own. Demolishing the building and putting a telephone exchange in its place did nothing to dispel the rumours. Three young men working the night-shift experienced the ghost for themselves. Heavy footsteps were heard upstairs and then they heard the lift in operation, apparently coming up to their floor from the ground floor. The doors opened but there was no-one inside.

The lift was also the scene of a more visible ghost when a cleaner who had worked at the exchange for over twenty years saw a rather ill-looking lady go into it. It was full daylight when the cleaner saw the blonde woman dash into the lift as if she was in a hurry to leave. Yet, even though the doors closed, the lift did not move. Concerned about the woman, Brenda opened the doors again – and the lift was empty. On another occasion Brenda's colleague was washing her hands in the ladies washroom on the fourth floor when she felt someone brush against her – but no-one else was in the room. The same ladies washroom was the scene of another event when two female night-shift workers visited the room and heard the taps gushing water, when they were both in the cubicles.

The source of these odd happenings is thought to be the ghost of William Murray, the one-time owner of the theatre which once occupied the plot. However, given the above experiences – the woman in the lift, the taps in the ladies' room – that seems unlikely. Or, just possibly, there is more than one ghost at the Exchange…

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Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history - author of 'Lancashire Folk' published by Schiffer Publishing Winter 2015 - 9780764349836 £17.50. 'Manchester Folk', covering Greater Manchester, coming in 2017!
This entry was posted in Blackburn, Ghosts, Uncategorized and tagged ghost, Blackburn. Bookmark the permalink.

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GHOSTS, FOLK BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS IN MALAYSIA



Facts and Details

Belief in *hantu-hantu* (spirits, demons and ghosts) remains strong despite the strong imprint of Islam on Malaysia. As s true elsewhere in Southeast Asia, people go out of their way to avoid, appease and overcome evil spirits and occasionally call on guardian spirits or dead ancestors for help.

Malaysians often seek spiritual aid from an assortment of faith healers, mediums and witch doctors to solve personal problems and work issues. Authorities periodically crack down on unauthorised sects including ones involved in exorcisms and other weird stuff. Belief in the supernatural has long been entrenched among Malaysia's main Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnic communities, though occult rituals have waned in recent decades.

Beliefs in ghosts, demons and goblin is strong despite the fact that Islam forbids Muslims from having anything to do with such beings. Shamans (known in Malay as dukun or bomoh) are said to be able to make use of spirits and demons for either benign or evil purposes. Although Western writings often compare this to the familiar spirits of English witchcraft, it actually corresponds more closely with the Japanese inugami and other types of shikigami, in that the spirits are hereditary and passed down through families.

Julia Zappei of AFP wrote: “Malays were animist before Islam's 15th-century arrival, but belief in the existence of spirits separable from physical forms and black magic still persist. Claims of real-life "sightings" remain common. In January 2012, local media reported residents of a suburb of the capital Kuala Lumpur patrolling streets after two "orang minyak" were spotted. Meanwhile, reports of school classes being disrupted by suspected cases of "possessed" students are regular. In one publicised incident in 2008, when 35 students were gripped by hysteria in a school in eastern Pahang state, school authorities reportedly held special religious recitals and prayers and engaged a spiritual healer to "cleanse" the school. [Source: Julia Zappei, AFP, March 20, 2012]

One Malaysia wrote on a bulletin board for The Star: “I believe ghosts exist and they call the forest their home. I love the Supernatural Survival Tips [See Below] that you had. It’s better to be safe than sorry. I just want to add another tip: if you see anything weird in the forest or on a lonely stretch of road at night, don’t acknowledge it or point it out. It might end up following you home. A Malay custom is to take a bath (wudu) when you return home at night before playing with your children. I would also like to further clarify on the term “buang hantu”(discarding ghosts). Some modern readers may have no clue as to what this means. Some people believe in acquiring ghosts for witchcraft, to improve business or for whatever greedy/selfish/evil intentions they may have. After a while, these beings may turn on them or be passed on to their children when they die, so the act of “buang hantu” means literally getting rid of the ghost/s.[Source: The Star, April 22, 2006]

Haruspicy (searching for omens in the entrails of animals) to predict the future has been practiced in Malaya. The job of Haji Ahman Haji Abdullah, who was in his 80s in the 1990s, was preventing rain. His services are most sought for sporting events, especially golf tournaments.

Malaysia: Truly Bizarre?

In January 2007, Reuters reported: “Malaysia has launched its biggest tourism drive since independence under its famous slogan "Malaysia: Truly Asia", but it may as well read "truly bizarre". Recent visitors to the Southeast Asian nation have read serious newspaper articles about miracle healers and a mysterious giant ape in the country's southern jungles. Now, there is a woman who apparently secretes gem-stones out of her big toes. The wondrous toes of 23-year-old Siti Suhana Saadon, a rubber-tapper's daughter, have become a media sensation, drawing serious commentary from health officials and medical experts. Welfare authorities have even offered to pay for tests to be carried out on the poor villager and her collection of clear round stones, the New Straits Times said on Thursday. "I would like to see her. Her condition is very unusual," the mainstream daily quoted a senior academic as saying. [Source: Reuters, January 25, 2007 *^*]

“Malaysians are willing to suspend disbelief when dealing with the supernatural, if recent newspaper coverage is any guide. Last year, conservationist Vincent Chow captured headlines at home and abroad by saying he had

found evidence of a "Bigfoot" wandering the jungles of Johor state, leaving footprints the size of dinner plates and impressive piles of scatological evidence. "Malaysians may be in for the biggest scientific discovery in human history if the theory of the biodiversity expert Vincent Chow on the origin of the creature called 'big-foot' is proven true," state news agency Bernama declared last June. *^*

“For tourists who like the bizarre and unexplained, Malaysia also offers a crocodile-whisperer and until recently a special exhibit of ghoulish human-looking remains, known as 'jenglot', which are vampires according to Malay folklore. Standing up to a metre (3 ft) tall, 'jenglot' appear to have charred skin, long black hair and sharp fangs. They are used in villages as a spiritual guard dog to scare off trespassers. Last year's exhibit drew big crowds to a small museum outside Kuala Lumpur, including a local paranormal investigation group, Seekers, which reportedly put some of the figures in a room under 24-hour camera surveillance to catch any of them moving about. Seekers has yet to announce a breakthrough. *^*

“It is also too late to see Malaysia's "Snake King", Ali Khan Samsuddin, who spent 25 years mesmerising scorpions and snakes during live performances. He died last month after being bitten by a king cobra that failed to fall under his spell. But famed crocodile whisperer Cheek Inu, aged in his 70s, is still communicating with the fearsome reptiles, in the frontier state of Sarawak, on Borneo island, though some refuse to listen. "His prowess is not a myth as he has proven his ability in various past incidents," the New Straits Times said in September after Cheek Inu was called in to help capture a crocodile that had eaten a 12-year-old boy swimming in the Sarawak River. Seven years ago, Cheek Inu was credited with coaxing a 5.5 metre (18 ft) crocodile to come out of hiding, crawl up a river bank, turn over and die. Unfortunately, the 12-year-old boy's killer proved to be far more stubborn and remained at large.” *^*

Traditional Healers in Malaysia

Spiritual healers are known as *bomoh* or *dukun*. They preside over curing ceremonies in which they go into trances. Patients are sometimes treated with a body smoking ritual in which the bomoh calls on friendly spirits to remove the source of the illness. Bomoh also employ a wide range of potions and herbal medicines. Bine-setting if often done by local healers. In many placed midwives still assist in the delivery of babies.

Some traditional medical practices in Malaysia are pretty bizarre and creepy. In October 2004, Associated Press reported: “A practitioner of traditional medicine in Malaysia was arrested for allegedly using kidnapped children as human guinea pigs while trying to find new cures, a newspaper reported on Sunday. The man was detained with four children. The man was detained with four others after a 14-year-old boy escaped from a house on October 4, and told police he had been held captive for three months and was the subject of bizarre experiments. The boy claimed that in one of the experiments, leeches were placed all over his body. [Source: AP, October 2004]

Ghost, Demons and Goblins in Malaysia

Malays, as with other Southeast Asians, have always taken great interest in stories of ghosts and spirits. It must be stressed that due to the animistic root of Malay folklore, these ghosts are seen as sharing the plane of existence with humans and are not always considered evil. However, when the delicate line that separates the boundaries of existence is crossed, or a transgression of living spaces occurs, a conflict ensues that may result in disturbances such as possessions. [Source: Wikipedia]

The Malay word for ghost is hantu. However, this word also covers all sorts of demons, goblins and undead creatures and are thought to have real physical bodies, instead of just apparitions or spectres. The most famous of these is the pontianak or matianak, the ghost of a female stillborn child which lures men in the form of a beautiful woman.

There are many Malay ghost myths, remnants of old animist beliefs that have been shaped by Hindu-Buddhist cosmology and later Muslim influences, in the modern states of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore and among the Malay diaspora in neighbouring Southeast Asian countries. The general word for ghost is hantu, of which there exist a wide variety. Some ghost concepts such as the female vampires pontianak and penanggal are shared throughout the region. While traditional belief doesn't consider all ghosts as necessarily evil, Malaysian popular culture tends to categorize them all as types of evil djinn.

History of Ghosts and Traditional Spiritual Beliefs in Malaysia

Traditional ghost beliefs are rooted in prehistoric animist beliefs. However, the area has long had extensive contact with other cultures, and these have affected the form of some of the legends. Trade links with southern India and China were established several centuries BCE, in large part shaping the local culture and folklore. The Indian faiths of Hinduism and Buddhism were particularly influential in Southeast Asia. Islam was also introduced from India, and had become the dominant religion in Java and Sumatra by the end of the 16th century. The Muslim beliefs overlaid and mixed with existing cultural and religious influences, rather than eradicating them altogether. One example is the festival of Mandi Safar, originally a Tamil Hindu practice where people bathe in the sea or river and perform ceremonies that purify and protect against sickness and misfortune, and which also serves to introduce marriageable young people. After the introduction of Islam it was given new meaning as a festival to celebrate the recovery of Mohammed from an illness. The ritual has long been banned in Malaysia on the grounds that it contravenes the teaching of Islam, but continues to be practiced in Malaysia and Indonesia. [Source: Wikipedia]

According to traditional Malay lore, the human soul (semangat or essence) is about the size of a thumb and appears as a miniature form of the body (sarung or casing) in which it resides. Able to fly and quickly "flash" from one location to another, the soul is often compared to and addressed as if it were a bird. It temporarily leaves the person's body temporarily during sleep, trance and sickness, before departing permanently at death. When the soul leaves the body it assumes the form of a sort of homunculus, and in this form can feed on the souls of others. At death, the soul usually passes into another person, animal or plant. The spirit or ghost, usually called the anitu, continues to linger and may be harmful to its survivors.

An old Malay belief is that a person's ghost the haunts their grave for seven days before departing. Ghosts may also return and take possession of a living person, causing madness or illness. Ghosts are generally are believed to be active only at night time, especially during a full moon. One way to evade such a ghost is for all the victims to formally change their name, so that when the ghost returns it will not recognize them. Another is to tempt the ghost with a meal. When the ghost turns into an animal such as a chicken so that it can eat, it may be killed and destroyed. Ghosts traditionally were blamed for some illnesses. To cure them, the shaman (dukun or bomoh) in a village would burn incense, recite incantations, and in some cases sacrifice an animal and wash its blood into a river to appease the ghost. Healing dances may also be performed, such as the mak yong, saba, main puteri, or the Ulek Mayang.

Toyol, Lang Suir and Other Malaysian Birth Spirits

Childbirth-spirits are ghosts which are in some way related to birth or pregnancy. A significant number of them are the malignant spirits of stillborn children, while others prey on infants. All are a reflection of a formerly high infant mortality rate. [Sources: Wikipedia, Revathi Murugappan, the Star; See also squidoo squidoo.com/malaysian-ghosts-ghouls-goblins]

Bajang is a kind of familiar spirit acquired by a male who says the proper incantations over the newly-buried body of a stillborn child. It takes the form of a civet or musang and may cause convulsions, unconsciousness or delirium. In exchange, its master feeds it eggs and milk. As with other spirits of this type, a bajang may turn on its master if it is neglected. Although a bajang can be made to attack any whom its master chooses, it is considered particularly dangerous to infants and young children. In former times, some children would be given "bajang bracelets" (gelang bajang) made of black silk to protect them against it, and sharp metal objects such as scissors would be placed near babies for the same purpose. Even the striations of pregnancy are somewhat jokingly said to be the scars left by a bajang's attack.

Lang suir, also spelled langsuir or lang suyar, is version of pontianak (see Below) but said to be the deadliest banshee in Malay folklore. The Lang suir is said to be the ghost of a woman who died while giving birth to a stillborn child which turns into a pontianak, or during pregnancy before the forty days of uncleanness have expired. The mother's grief changes her into a type of flying banshee. To prevent a pregnant woman's corpse from becoming a lang suir, glass beads are placed into the mouth, an egg is placed in each armpit, and needles are placed in the hands. Lang suir can appear as beautiful women with long nails (a traditional mark of beauty), ankle-length hair and dressed in green. They also have the ability to take the form of an owl with long talons. Being fond of eating fish, they usually haunt coastal areas and attack pregnant women out of jealousy. It is possible to tame a lang suir by cutting off her long nails and stuffing the hair into the hole at the back of her neck.

The toyol is a small creature created from a dead human foetus using black magic. Toyol is often translated into English as "goblin", but actually it is a small child spirit invoked from a dead human fetus. Traditionally described as looking more or less like a naked or near-naked toddler, modern depictions often give them green or greyish skin, fangs, and pointy ears. The toyol may be used by its master to steal things from other people, or to do mischief. Because they are childlike in their thinking, valuables can be protected by scattering beans on the floor, or leaving sweets or toys next to them, all of which will distract the toyol. It is said that the owner of a toyol may become rich, but at the expense of the health, fortune and even the lives of members of their family.

To create a toyol a baby is revived by a Bomoh (a Malaysian shaman) using dark magic. The main intention of creating a Toyol is to use it to steal for its owner. The Toyol will go from one house to another at night, looking for money and jewelry which it will steal for its owner. There are three ways of preventing a Toyol from stealing from you. The first method is by scattering beans around the floor where you keep your money. The Toyol will be distracted by the beans and will spend the entire night trying to count the beans. The second method is by placing some sweets near your money. Instead of stealing the money, the Toyol, being formerly a child, will steal the sweets instead. The last way is by placing toys near the place where you store your valuables. the Toyol will stop and spend the entire night playing with the toys instead. In order to sustain the Toyol's loyalty, the owner of this imp will feed it with his own blood every once in a while. A Toyol that is not fed will eventually go on a rampage.

Pontianak and Vampire-like Female Demons

The Pontianak is the most famous Malaysian ghost. Also known as matianak or kuntilanak, it is the ghost of a stillborn female and a type of vampire in Malay folklore. According to the legend, a Pontianak (pronounced "pone-tea-ah-nark") is either the restless spirit of a dead pregnant woman or the vengeful spirit of a woman murdered by her own lover. The former version generally does little harm except probably scaring the heebie-jeebies out of you. She would usually be found standing by the side of a road cradling her tombstone like a baby and asking for a ride to her graveyard. The later is very violent, known to go on a blood lust until she either kills her lover or the male ancestor of her lover. The classic Pontianak would have very long hair flowing down to her hips, usually covering her face, full white dress sometimes with bloodstains, long fangs and long fingernails. When she's near, you will smell a very strong flowery smell. [Sources: Wikipedia, Revathi Murugappan, the Star; See also squidoo squidoo.com/malaysian-ghosts-ghouls-goblins]

To prevent a stillborn baby from becoming a pontianak—as with its mother the lang suir—a needle is placed in each of the corpse's hands and a hen's egg under each armpit. Depicted as an ugly woman wiith sharp nails and a white dress, the pontianak can also take the form of a beautiful young woman or a night-bird. When she is close, she gives off a strong smell of frangipani. It is usually encountered by the roadside or under a tree, and attack men and drink their blood. The Indonesian kuntilanak, however, typically uses its bird form to attack virgin women. The bird, which makes a "ke-ke-ke" sound as it flies, may be sent through black magic to make a woman sick, the characteristic symptom being vaginal bleeding. A pontianak can be made into a good wife, by placing a nail into the hole at the nape of its neck (called Sundel Bolong). Modern popular culture often confuses the pontianak with its mother the lang suir. However, traditional myth is clear that the pontianak is the ghost of a dead baby and not a pregnant woman. A similar ghost called tiyanak exists in Philippine lore.

The penanggalan is a flying head with its disembodied stomach sac dangling below. Another type of female vampire, it is attracted to the blood of newborn infants and uses entrails trailing behind her head to grasp her victims There are several stories of her origins. One is that she was a woman who was sitting meditating in a large wooden vat used for making vinegar when she was so startled that her head jumped up from her body, pulling her entrails with it. Another has her as a normal woman during the day, whose head and entrails leave her body at night. If a baby is expected, branches from a type of thistle are placed around the doors or windows to protect the house, since her entrails will be caught by the thorns.

The penanggalan is known in Thai as krasue and a similar Philippine ghost called the manananggal which preys on pregnant women with an elongated proboscis-like tongue. The manananggal is spirit of an older, beautiful woman capable of severing its upper torso to fly into the night with huge bat wings to prey on unsuspecting pregnant women in their homes. The hantu kum-kum is the ghost of an old woman who sucks the blood of virgin girls to regain her youth.

Hantu Ray (“Supreme Ghost) and Malaysian Ghosts Used In Black Magic

The hantu raya (pronounced "harn-too rah-ya") is considered one of the most powerful of Malay ghosts. Possessing great strength, it usually takes on the appearance of its owner and carries out manual labour on their behalf. However, it is said to have a limited range, being unable to go far from its home. [Sources: Wikipedia, Revathi Murugappan, the Star; See also squidoo squidoo.com/malaysian-ghosts-ghouls-goblins]

The Hantu Raya is actually the leader of a legion of demons. Its name translates as "supreme ghost" or "great ghost". A person who has made an alliance with the Hantu Raya will be granted immense power over man and spirits. In exchange all it wants is to be provided with whatever it asks for, some occasional offerings and a new owner before the current owner dies. The Hantu Raya will then be inherited from generation to generation. If the current owner fails to provide it a new owner, he will suffer horribly when dying and return either as a zombie or become one of the Hantu Raya's minions.

Polong is a kind of bottled-imp, created by keeping the blood of a murder victim in a bottle and saying certain incantations over it for seven or fourteen days. The owner, who is treated as the polong's parent, must feed the spirit daily with blood from their finger. A person who has been afflicted by the polong will cry out and wildly strike at people nearby, all the while blind and deaf to their surroundings, and unconscious of what they are doing. In such cases, a bomoh would be called into question the polong and find out who is its parent and where they are located. If the polong lies or conceals the identity of its owner, the victim will die after one or two days.

The pelesit a type of grasshopper or cricket that precedes the polong's arrival. It is created from the tongue of a newly-buried first-born child whose mother was also the eldest of her siblings. Its appearance is that of a cricket and it is kept in a bottle which is buried if the owner wishes to rid herself of it. In advance of a polong's arrival, the pelesit will enter the body of whomever its mistress has told it to attack. A person who has been thus afflicted might rave about cats. The pelesit is in many ways comparable to the bajang, but whereas the bajang's owner is always male, the pelesit may only be kept by a female. It may be fed on blood from the tip of the fourth finger or, alternatively, with saffron rice. Like the polong, the pelesit can be forced to reveal the name of their owner through magical questioning.

The hantu bulu is a demon that is summoned by practitioners of black magic. The hantu pusaka is a spirit that had been summoned by a Bomoh and is handed down from one generation to the next. Hantu kuda is spirit that resembles a horse and possesses dancers who do the Kuda Kepang dance.

Ghosts and Spirits Linked to Water

Hantu air (water spirits) live in large bodies of water, such as a river or lake. Some are said to be the ghosts of people who drowned, but they are generally independent spirits. If they show themselves, it is usually in the form of a floating log. They can be dangerous, and may drown or eat people. Until the 1960s, Malays in Trengganu would regularly pay respects to the sea spirits in the puja laut ceremony. [Sources: Wikipedia, Revathi Murugappan, the Star; See also squidoo squidoo.com/malaysian-ghosts-ghouls-goblins]

Hantu laut (sea spirits) are animistic water spirits who assist fishermen and sailors. Until the 1960s, Malays in Trengganu used to regularly pay respects to the sea spirits through the puja pantai or puja laut ceremony.

Hantu jerambang is an evil spirit that lives in the middle of the sea and loves to cling on the mast of passing ships. Hantu balung bidai is an evil spirit that lives in water. It is flat and shapeless and will wrap itself around anyone swimming in its water and drown them. Hantu bandan is spirit that lives under waterfalls.

Ghosts and Spirits of the Forest and Nature

Jembalang tanah are earth demons, which may act dangerously if not appeased with the proper rituals. Mambang are animistic spirits of various natural phenomena. They are very ancient demons that originate from Indonesia. Penunggu are tutelary spirits of particular places such as caves, forests and mountains. Hantu anak gua batu is a spirit that lives in small caves. Hantu lubang live in large holes or between large rocks. Hantu Hantuan is a spirit that lives in forests. Hantu gunung lives on mountains. [Sources: Wikipedia, Revathi Murugappan, the Star; See also squidoo squidoo.com/malaysian-ghosts-ghouls-goblins]

Jenglot are doll-like vampiric creatures said to be found in the jungles. They are usually female. What are claimed to be dead jenglot are sometimes sold or exhibited, but they appear to be man-made.

Hantu galah (pole ghost) is a tall male ghost with extremely long and thin limbs. It is ound among trees and bamboo. To make it disappear, a person simply picks up a stick or twig and breaks it. Hantu pisang (a Mah Meri belief) is A beautiful ghost that is supposedly formed when the heart of the banana bud is pierced with a nail attached to a thread.

Orang bunian are said to inhabit jungles. They are similar to elves except they are invisible to most people. Orang halus (invisible people) are dwarfs that live in the jungles and are conversant in Malay! They usually cannot be encountered unless one is purified by cleansing the body and wearing clean clothes.

Hantu beruk is a spirit that takes on the form of an ape and usually possesses dancers. Hantu belian is a spirit that takes on the form of a tiger. Hantu songkei is a spirit that protects animals and frees from from a hunter's trap. Hantu denai is a fierce demon that lives in forest and has the characteristics of a wild beast.

Hantu puteri is a spirit that will seduce men and lead them deep into forests where they will get lost. Hantu punjut is a ghost that takes children who wander into the forest late at night. Hantu bunyi-bunyian is a formless spirit—just a voice in the forest that beckons to people—causing then to lose their way. Hantu jembalang is a spirit that is bound to a certain area. If any construction is done at that area, offerings need to be made to appease it. Puaka are nature spirit of a place which are typically said to reside in abandoned buildings.

Ghosts Related to Death, Murder and Funerals

Pocong (pronounced "poh-cho-ng") or hantu bungkus (wrapped ghost) is the ghost of a dead person still bound in its white burial shroud. When a person is buried, the shroud is supposed to be untied. If it remains tied at the top, the body is supposed to become a pocong. All that needs to be done to liberate the sprit of a pocong is to untie the shroud and the spirit will be released. The Pocong is generally harmless. Sometimes they feed on the blood of babies. [Sources: Wikipedia, Revathi Murugappan, the Star; See also squidoo squidoo.com/malaysian-ghosts-ghouls-goblins]

When a Muslim person dies, he is wrapped tightly in his death shroud and placed into his grave without a coffin. Over a few weeks, the cloth will begin to degenerate and fall off and the spirit of the person is released. However, if the body is still bound by its death shroud after more than 40 days, the person will rise from the dead as a Pocong, still wrapped up. Because it is tightly bound, all the Pocong can do is hop.

Hantu golek is just like the Pocong, a ghost that is bound in its death shroud. But rather than hopping, the Hantu Golek rolls on its side. The hantu kocong is an evil spirit that roams graveyards and pounces on passers by. Hantu kubur is the generic term for any ghosts that haunts graveyards. Hantu harimau/keramat is a spirit that lives in and protects graveyards.

A polong (pronounced "poe-low-ng") is one of the worst spirits to encounter. The Polong is the enslaved spirit of a murdered person. The Bomoh would pour the blood of the murdered person in a small bottle for a couple of weeks before using dark magic to invoke the spirits. When the Polong is ready, the bottle will begin to emit sounds of crying and moaning. Then, periodically, the owner would feed it some of his own blood to tie the demon to him. A Polong does not have an identifiable form but can resemble a thumb-sized woman. It is created to be used as a weapon and is only unleashed when the Bomoh wants to badly hurt or kill someone. If it is no longer fed with blood, the Polong will grow extremely wild and go on a bloodhunt.

Hantu bangkit is the ghost of a murdered person which hangs around his grave. Hantu jerangkung is a skeletal ghost of a murdered man. Hantu pelak is a ghost that is seeking revenge and haunts the place where he had died. .Hantu daguk is sort of like a will-o-wisp. It resembles smoke or mist ans is usually the ghost of a murdered person.

Other Malaysian Ghosts

Hantu kopek (nipple ghost) appears as an old woman with pendulous breasts. Hantu It lures men who cheat on their wives. Hantu apu is a spirit that loves to hang around parties and gatherings. Hantu jamuan is a spirit that must be invited to any party or gathering or else it will wreck havoc. Hantu batu is a formless ghost that loves to throw stones at passers by. The Mumiai (pronounced moo-mee-eye) is a ghost who throws things around and attacks people who are especially lazy or criminal. [Sources: Wikipedia, Revathi Murugappan, the Star; See also squidoo squidoo.com/malaysian-ghosts-ghouls-goblins]

Orang minyak (oily man) is a cursed man who rapes women at night. Because he is covered in oil, he's difficult to catch. According to legend, Satan offered to grant all worldly desires to the orang minyak if he raped 21 virgin girls within seven days and worshiped Satan as a God. Orang minyak usually douse themselves with oil and run around naked. Although the orang minyak is believed to be human, there are countless stories of them being related to the supernatural world.

Health-related spirits and demons include: 1) Hantu gengal, an evil spirit that causes a person to be mute; 2) a jembalang, a demon or evil spirit that usually brings disease; 3) Hantu bisa, an evil spirit that causes blood poisoning; and 4) Hantu buta, a spirit that causes blindness.

Hantu kuang is spirit that has 100 eyes. Hantu langut/longgak is a spirit with the head of a dog and body of a man that loves to hunt. Hantu tenggelung is A headless ghost. .Hantu kertau is an evil spirit with the head of a wild boar and horns of a deer. It preys on woman during childbirth.

Other Malaysia ghosts includes 1) the bota, a type of evil spirit, usually a giant; 2) hantu lilin: a wandering spirit that carries a torch or a lit candle at night; Hantu Pemburu: the Spectral Huntsman whose head is always looking upwards with a shoot growing from his neck; 3) Hantu tinggi (literally "tall ghost"), a type of giant that will flee at the sight of a naked body; 5) Raksaksa, humanoid man-eating demons, often able to change their appearance at will.

Ghosts in the Media and Popular Culture in Malaysia

In both Malaysia and Indonesia, ghosts and the supernatural have long been the popular subject of stories in television, documentaries, film, and magazines like Mastika and Tok Ngah. The 1958 black-and-white horror movie Sumpah Orang Minyak is one of many films based on the orang minyak concept. It told of a hunchback who through supernatural means becomes handsome, but turns invisible after violating his oath. The devil offers to help achieve his worldly desires, on condition that he rapes 21 girls within 7 days. [Source: Wikipedia]

Other Malay ghost films such as Pontianak and Revenge of Pontianak received tremendous response at their time of release. With the rise of the Islamization movement, the Malaysian government suppressed production of local films involving ghosts out of concern that they would encourage superstition. However, access to foreign horror movies made such a ban futile, and these restrictions were eventually lifted with the release of Pontianak: Harum Sundal Malam. The film was well-received, spawning a sequel and a follow-up TV series. Numerous other horror films followed suit but, in keeping with current religious trends, they usually portray all supernatural beings as evil, far removed from traditional beliefs. This is particularly so in documentaries and television series involving ghost hunters.

2007's Jangan Pandang Belakang ("Don't Look Back") holds the record as Malaysia's highest-grossing film. It centers around a malicious spirit which the hero had unknowingly brought to his fiancé's home after picking up a small jar found washed up at the beach. The 2010 Indonesian soft-porn horror movie Hantu Puncak Datang Bulan (The Menstruating Ghost of Puncak) caused considerable controversy at the time of its release. Telling the experiences of a group of young adults in a haunted house, it has much semi-nude sexuality, and has been condemned by conservative Muslim leaders.

Supernatural Survival Tips in the Malaysian Jungle

How do you deal with the paranormal to have a pleasant jungle trek? Here are a few tips provided by the interviewees and the Internet gathered The Star, a Malaysian newspaper: 1) If you suddenly smell jasmine, don’t turn around. Just move on quickly. Or say a silent prayer. 2) Quietly ask for permission before entering a jungle. Some 4WD convoys, for example, pray and burn joss sticks at the shrine to Datuk Kong, guardian spirit of the jungle, before entering. 3) If a particular rock formation looks like an abnormally comfortable resting place, don’t use it. 4) Don’t call your friends by their names, instead, agree on codenames beforehand and use those. 6) If you hear somebody calling out your name, don’t answer or follow the voice. 7) If a particular tree is surrounded by an unusual clearing, avoid it. [Source: The Star, April 15, 2006 **]

8) If you see strange things like a mansion, white-robed elderly person, someone playing the drums up a tree or a well-tended garden in the middle of the jungle, walk away from it. Stick to your path. People get lost easily because they are drawn to these things by the forest goblins or bunian. 9) Don’t pick up ‘souvenirs’, especially at ‘suspicious-looking’ places. They are the jungle’s. An aside: A group of rangers were deep in the forests of

Belum one day when they came across a field of beautiful flowers. They walked away but kept coming back to it, despite trying several paths out. It then occurred to the leader to ask if anyone had taken anything from the field. One of them admitted he had plucked a flower. He was told to leave it behind. After a prayer, they found their way out easily. **

How do you look for people lost in the forest? Here's how some folks searched for the four boys that got lost on Fraser's Hill last year. 1) Mohd Radzuan Mohd Nordin, the imam there, trekked through the forest and when he 'felt' the boys' presence, he would say the azan and ask the bunian to release them. Chamba Mohammad, one of the Orang Asli rescuers, read mantras and followed the direction of kemenyan (incense) smoke. 2) Say prayers – "There are spirits in the jungle," says Yap Kok Sun. "Don't try to defy or challenge them, and say 'I don't believe, I don't care'. Since becoming a Christian, I always say a prayer before entering the jungle. It has helped me." 3) According to jungle guide Yusof Aziz, the makhluk halus or forest goblins don't like blood. So when a woman is menstruating, she should wash out her sanitary pad later. Burying it doesn't work because an animal may dig it up. 4) Some people who see spirits, says Loh Foh Seng, may have bad luck in work and health. The traditional Chinese remedy is to go to a temple to jeen wunn (change your luck). 5) Loh's general advice is: "Don't kacau the spirits. Just tell them quietly, you go your way, I'll go mine. Mutual respect is the way. After all, we are just visiting and it is their territory. It's like you go to your friend's house, of course you will greet the parents, 'hello aunty, hello uncle'." **

Malaysian Man Dumps Wife for Being a Demon

In January 2011, a Malaysian man abandoned his wife after a temple medium convinced him she was a demon who wanted to kill him. Reuters reported: "The Star newspaper quotes the wife, who gave her name as Loh, as saying her factory-manager husband now wants a divorce and also refuses to meet their two teenage children for fear his wife will use them to kill him. "The medium told my husband I had been casting spells on him for the past 15 years," Loh was quoted as telling a news conference in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. "He refused to eat or drink at home because he thought I poisoned the food." [Source: Reuters, January 6, 2011]

"Loh says the medium was heavily in debt and likely taking advantage of her husband, who had withdrawn their children's savings before deserting the family. Malaysians often seek spiritual aid from an assortment of faith healers, mediums and witch doctors to solve personal problems and work issues. But there has been a steady increase in complaints of cheating and sexual abuse, which has prompted the government to announce it will table a bill this year requiring faith healers to register with the Ministry of Health.

People Killed in Malaysian Exorcism Rituals

In January 2010, a Malaysian court has sentenced a man and his cousin to 10 years each in prison over the death of the man's parents during a violent spiritual cleansing ritual that involved beating the slain couple with brooms and motorcycle helmets. AFP reported: Defence lawyer Supramaniam Kasia Pillai said a third man accused over the grisly 2008 murder of the couple, during a ceremony to expel evil spirits, was acquitted on the grounds of insanity. Supramaniam said the couple had been beaten "with everything the men could get hold of - helmets, table tops and even the table legs, with the aim to drive out evil". He said the High Court found Muhamad Fauzi Abdul Razak, 23 and his cousin, Muhammad Nizam Mohamad Ibrahim, 21, guilty of culpable homicide and sentenced them today to 10 years in prison for each of the deaths, to be served concurrently. [Source: AFP, January 25, 2010]

"Public prosecutor Aidatul Azura Zainal Abidin said the three accused had testified that their victims were willing participants in the cleansing ritual. "But this is something terrible. Normal people will not do this harmful act. They took a video of the session. The victims were beaten with helmets," she said. Mohamad Ilyas, the acquitted third suspect, said during the trial that he had gained spiritual powers through his association with a banned Islamic cult, and that he could heal sick people and raise the dead." [Ibid]

In August 2012, Associated Press reported: "A 3-year-old Malaysian girl was killed in a suspected exorcism ritual by family members who believed she was possessed by evil spirits, police said. Police raided a house in northern Penang state after receiving a distress call from a family member and found a group of eight people lying on top of the girl in a bedroom, said district police chief Azman Abdul Lah. The girl was face down under the human pile, which comprised her parents, grandmother, uncle, aunt, two cousins and their Indonesian maid,

he said. The room was dark and chanting could be heard from under a blanket covering the group, Azman said. The girl died of suffocation, and all eight involved have been detained, he added. [Source: AP, August 7, 2012]

In August 2004, a court aquitted three Malaysians with killing an American woman in 2001 in an occult ritual to obatain lottery ticket numbers. The body of Carolyn Janice Ahmad, 35, of Duluth, Minnesota, were discovered in a shallow grave at an oil palm plantation in northern Malaysia in June 2001. The three were acquitted because of discrepancies in the testimony of a key witness.

News services reported in 2001: “Malaysian police arrested the last of four suspects in the slaying of an American woman who authorities believe was killed in a ritual to obtain lottery numbers from the spirits. The remains of Carolyn Jamaica Noraini Abdullah, who was 35 when she disappeared near the northern city of Ipoh in November 1999, were unearthed in a shallow grave at an oil palm plantation. Authorities believe the killing was carried out by three men and a woman. The female suspect, who is in her 20s, surrendered to authorities in Kuala Lumpur, the capital, said Zuber Shariff, a senior police official in Ipoh. Police said one of the suspects led police to the grave last week. Another male suspect died in a car accident earlier this year, and the third is in prison for a firearms offense. Police said the woman’s Malaysian husband has refused requests for an interview. [Source: Wire Reports, June 27, 2001]

Funerals in Malaysia

See Islam factsanddetails.com Click Muslim Customs

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Oct 11 · 7 min read



Dramatization of Salem Trials, lithograph, 1892.

Ghosts of Salem

The Alarming Resurgence of Violence against Witches—And How to Stop It

As we prepare for the festivities of Halloween, it's important to remember that violence against accused witches remains a grim fact of life in the twenty-first century. And it's getting worse.

We like to think of witch hunts as something that petered out after the mob murders in Salem, Massachusetts, in the early 1690s. But in the past decade

we've witnessed disturbingly similar acts of violence against accused witches in Africa, the Pacific, Latin America, and even the United States and Western Europe.

Although the last international efforts to track such violence go back to a United Nations Refugee Agency Report in 2009 and a UNICEF report in 2010—both of which found a rise, especially in Africa, of violence and child abuse linked to witchcraft accusations—recent news reports suggest a deepening and disturbing pattern, often directed against women.

In Papua New Guinea hundreds of women accused of witchery have been brutally murdered since 2000-—and in several cases publicly burned before crowds of hundreds. "These are becoming all too common in certain parts of the country," complained Prime Minister Peter O'Neill.

As a result, the southwestern Pacific nation repealed a 1971 law that permitted attackers to cite intent to combat witchcraft as a legal defense. But progress is slow. Although police do pursue attackers, convictions are rare.

Related violence—ranging from rape to murders to the parental abandonment of children accused of witchcraft—has been reported from South Africa to India. United Nations officials have described such murders as running into the tens of thousands worldwide, while beatings and banishments could run as high as the millions. "This is becoming an international problem—it is a form of persecution and violence that is spreading around the globe," Jeff Crisp, head the UN's refugee agency told a panel in 2009, the last year in which an international body studied the worldwide dimensions of this problem.

Children are increasingly victims in Central and West Africa. The UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that most of the 25,000 to 50,000 children who live on the streets of Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, ended up there after abandonment by families who accused them of witchcraft or possession. Accusations against "child witches" are fairly new. According to human rights researcher Aleksandra Cimpric, who has studied witchcraft-related violence in the Central African Republic, some of the earliest cases took hold around 2006.

No one is quite sure why this is happening now, but experts point to overpopulation, stresses on parents who are forced to relocate to cities to seek work, and the intense difficulties of raising children amid raw poverty. Particularly vulnerable are children who suffer from disabilities or protracted illnesses, which are sometimes seen as signs of demon possession. These

superstitions are stoked by local "healers" who charge parents to exorcise evil spirits.

The attacks on children are not limited to the economically deprived regions of the sub-Sahara. In 2012, England's *Daily Mail* reported "a rise in sadistic murders and attacks on children accused of witchcraft," noting 81 "sorcery cases" within the last decade, mostly in south Asian and African immigrant communities. These included the torture and murder of a 15-year-old boy, Kristy Bamu, in East London at the hands of his older sister and her boyfriend, both Congolese nationals, who accused him of sorcery after he wet his bed. (Such events are sometimes considered a sign of *kindoki*, or witchcraft, in the Congolese Lingala language.)

British police are now receiving special training in understanding and anticipating witchcraft-related abuse.

The Western violence tells a particular story, insofar as it seems to occur either within immigrant communities, as with the London killing, or within pockets of Caribbean or Hispanic communities, as with a recent Queens, NY, killing of two women, where there exists a presence, culturally and in occasional personal practice, of Santeria, Vodou, or some of the Latin-Caribbean traditions that are associated with witchcraft or spell work. Hence, this violence can be seen to "migrate" today across varying lines of geography.

Nor are such murders limited to mob violence or acts of sadistic vigilantism. Some legal systems sanction the killing of accused witches. Saudi Arabia's religious police have been targeting accused witches since 2009, and Saudi courts have followed suit with beheadings of people convicted of sorcery. Other punishments extend from lashings and decade-long prison sentences, sometimes for foreign workers accused casting spells against employers.

In a rare case that attracted international attention, a Lebanese TV personality, Ali Hussain Sibat, was arrested in Saudi Arabia in 2008 and sentenced to beheading for sorcery. Apprehended by that nation's notorious religious police while on a pilgrimage in Medina, Mr. Sibat was targeted for hosting a popular television show in his native Lebanon, "The Hidden," where he would make psychic predictions and prescribe love potions and spells. After an outcry by Amnesty International and other human-rights watchers, Saudi courts in 2010 stayed Mr. Sibat's s execution but sentenced him to a 15-year prison term.

This sudden interest in witchery can probably be traced to the royal family's attempts to appease its religious inquisitors by keeping them busy targeting a

defenseless (and mislabeled) handful of individuals. The religious police terrorize various segments of Saudi society while remaining a politically popular force among the nation's most fervently conservative constituencies. (Not surprisingly, the *Harry Potter* series is banned in the desert monarchy.)

As was once seen among lynch mobs in America's Deep South, twenty-first century witch hunters are mainly young men who appear to believe that they are earning a certain degree of community prestige by cleansing undesirables and enforcing social mores, especially in Africa where large parts of the continent experience the destabilizing currents of rapid urbanization, migration, family diffusion, and the fraying of the social fabric that is sometimes brought on by disease, HIV, and gross disparities in wealth.

Another factor seen in central Africa and its immigrant communities, is the advent of fervent revivalist churches in which self-styled pastor-prophets rail against witchery and demon-possession, sometimes specializing in—and often charging for—the casting out of evil spirits. One of Nigeria's most popular Pentecostal preachers, Helen Ukpabio, has written that "if a child under the age of 2 screams in the night, cries and is always feverish with deteriorating health, he or she is a servant of Satan." This kind of rhetoric heightens paranoia in societies already struggling with a wide range of social and economic ills.

And, finally, some experts point to fraud and graft, noting that many victims in the Pacific and Africa are widows, single mothers, or unmarried women, who, lacking in family or community protection, can be isolated and targeted, leaving them open to banishment or murder on the thinnest of charges, while their homes and property are seized by the accused's killers.

While this brutality persists across a wide range of settings and societies, it must not be accepted as a tragic repetition of ancient aggressions. Concrete measures can ease this violence:

** Laws against accusing children of witchcraft are needed throughout Africa and the southwestern Pacific. Such a law has already been enacted in Ms. Itauma's home state in Nigeria.

** Western branches of Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations should work with their African and immigrant counterparts to understand the tragedy and hatred that can spiral from "exorcisms." Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations in the U.S. do have contact with (and some influence over) newer congregations in central Africa, where some revivalist pastors stir up fury against witchcraft and perform for-profit exorcisms. The

current persecution of gays in Uganda likewise stems from an upcropping of fervent ministries. While no African congregation wants to feel dictated to by the West, there is a place for informational exchanges, cultural pressure, and Western ecclesiastical and ordaining bodies enacting prohibitions against for-profit exorcisms.

** Nations must combat police indifference to such crimes, especially in societies that traditionally harbor beliefs about "black magic" where police may be less inclined to punish those who attack perceived witches. The British government has issued instructional materials to police and social workers in immigrant communities; these could be exported and adapted to the needs of other nations.

** Witchcraft should be effectively decriminalized in nations where such prohibitions exist, such as the Solomon Islands, where witch hunts are also reported. Papua New Guinea has taken a right step in this direction, recently repealing a law that allowed attackers to claim anti-witchery as a defense. (Of less promise is that the nation extended its death penalty to those convicted of sorcery-related killings.)

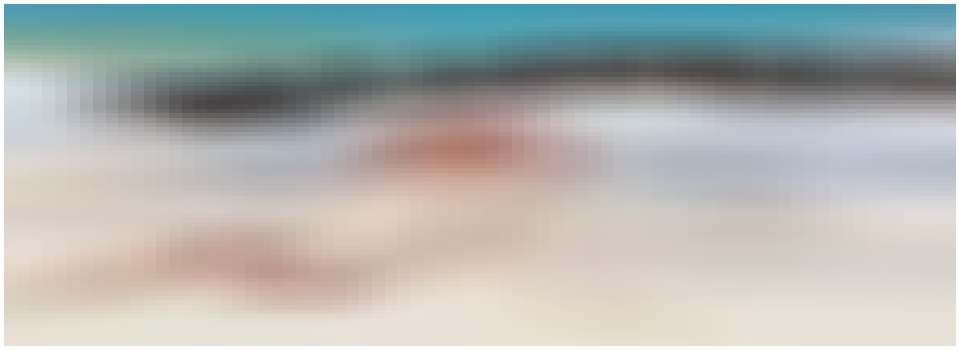
** The United Nations and international human-rights organizations should begin compiling yearly statistics on these crimes so the scale of this crisis can be properly understood.

** Perhaps most importantly, witchcraft-related violence should be branded as hate crimes by international courts, NGOs, and anywhere in the world (including the United States) where anti-hate statutes exist, either on national or municipal levels. A pillar of modern hate-crime statutes is that a victim need only be *perceived* as a member of a given group when that identification serves as a pretext to violence. Branding today's anti-witchery violence as a hate crime is vital to recognizing and combating this criminality.

The accusation of witchcraft has become an international flashpoint for mob violence. It is time to put the ghosts of Salem to rest. Twenty-first century witch hunts must end.



MITCH HOROWITZ is a PEN Award-winning historian and the author of *Occult America* and *One Simple Idea: How Positive Thinking Reshaped Modern Life*. Mitch has written on everything from the secret life of Ronald Reagan to the war on witches for *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Salon, Politico*, and *Time.com*. He is the host of ORIGINS: SUPERSTITIONS. *The Washington Post* says Mitch "treats esoteric ideas and movements with an even-handed intellectual studiousness that is too often lost in today's raised-voice discussions." Visit him at www.MitchHorowitz.com and @MitchHorowitz.



By Yoko Wakatsuki and Emiko Jozuka, CNN

Updated 11:34 PM ET, Mon November 7, 2016



Photos: Photos: When the ground gives way

This photo shows a giant sinkhole (C) in a five-lane urban boulevard, eroding soil and exposing under steel columns supporting commercial buildings in Fukuoka, southwestern Japan, on November 8, 20 injuries were reported as the accident occurred in the early morning hours. / AFP / JIJI PRESS / STR OUT (Photo credit should read STR/AFP/Getty Images)

1 of 20 Hide Ca

Story highlights

A huge sinkhole opens on a major Japanese road

The 15-meter deep sinkhole is currently filled with water

(CNN) — A gigantic sinkhole has opened in Japan, swallowing huge sections of road including traffic lights, near underground work to extend a subway tunnel.

The seven to eight meter-wide hole was first reported in the early hours of Tuesday morning local time, according to Motohisa Oda, a crisis management officer from Fukuoka city.

Nearby residents have been evacuated, and five major roads cordoned off in Hakata ward, in Fukuoka city's busy business district.

The sinkhole is now a whopping 27 meters wide, 30 meters long and 15 meters deep. It has also filled with water that seeped in from sewage pipes destroyed by collapsing sections of road.



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@utintibinbou

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博多駅前やばいですよ

3:53 PM - 7 Nov 2016

1,261 604

City officials were working nearby to extend the subway from JR Hakata Station to the city center along a 1.4 kilometer route.

Oda told CNN that the hole may have been triggered by the subterranean construction works.

The sinkhole has cut power to roughly 170 households across Fukuoka city. Saibu, a Japan-based gas supplier, is also checking for any gas leakages in the area.

While authorities are still investigating what exactly caused the hole, a few social media users in Japan have been joking about the kind of monsters that might emerge.



神
@worldgod223

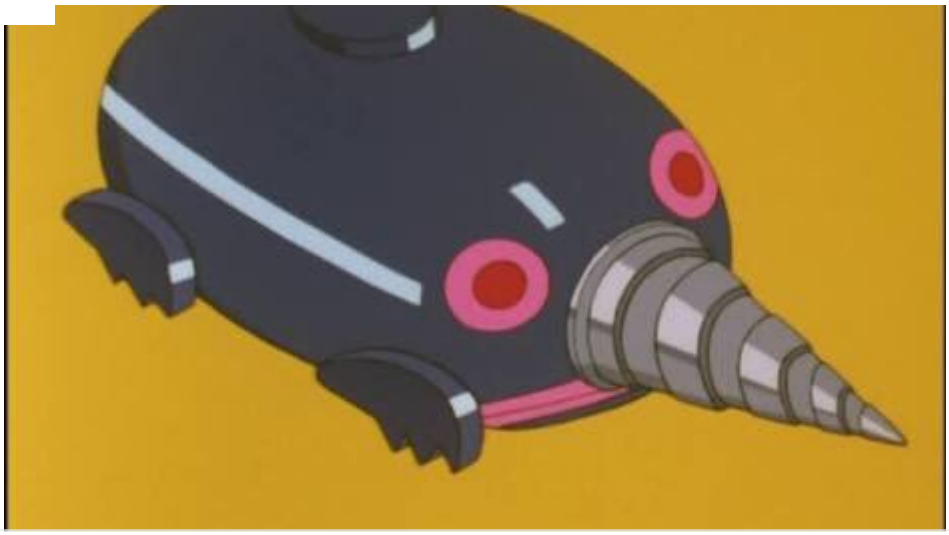
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7:05 PM - 7 Nov 2016

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"Uh oh, this thing might emerge in front of Hakata station," tweeted @_zukkyun, linking to a cartoon monster with a screwdriver for a nose.



□□□□に生まれた⊿た◯く◯と◯⊿[46]
@_zukkyun_

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2:52 PM - 7 Nov 2016

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Giraffe Wants To Nuzzle Way More Than He Wants To Be On Local News

huffingtonpost.com

“Man, that’s a lot of slobber.”

09/23/2016 09:48 am ET
Steven Hoffer Senior Editor, The Huffington Post

Sometimes a reporter really needs to stick their neck out to get a good interview. For CBS 8 San Diego reporter Ashley Jacobs, this wasn’t one of those times.

“What is happening? What is happening?” was all Jacobs could say as the 9-month-old Masai giraffe, named Bairdi, leaned in for some nuzzling on live television.

The Huffington Post reached out to the zoo to answer that very question.

“He could have had an itch he was trying to take care of as he had just scratched against the truck post prior to this,” San Diego Zoo Safari Park keepers said. “Ashley also may have had perfume or other scent on her that he was trying to rub (not mating related). It also could have just been misplaced or redirected energy from wanting more bottles as we had allowed Ashley to give him water in a bottle just prior to this.”

The broadcast on Monday was meant to raise publicity for the Zoo Food, Wine and Brew Celebration, a gala and fundraiser for wildlife conservation.

Jacobs, being a professional, took it all in stride.

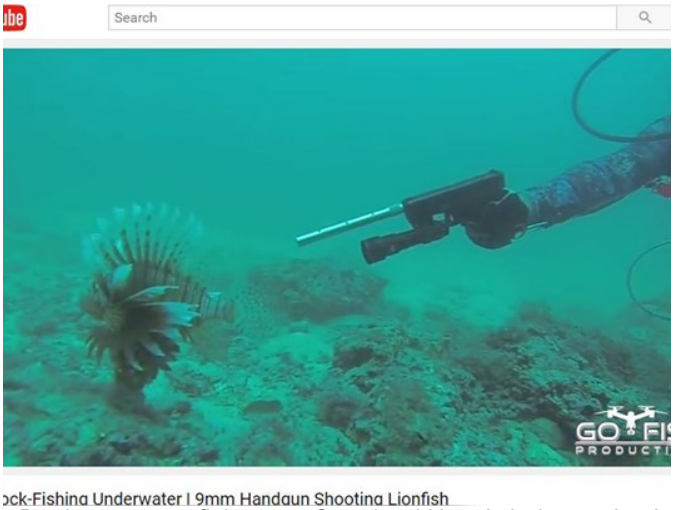
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Bradenton man uses Glock handgun to shoot lionfish

wtsp.com

10News Staff , WTSP1:34 PM. EST September 23, 2016



Bradenton sport fisherman Courtland Hunt is being praised for inventing a new way to kill lionfish. (Photo: Screencap via YouTube)

GULF OF MEXICO, Fla. -- A Bradenton man is being hailed by Outdoors 360 for "changing the underwater game" for using a modified Glock handgun to kill invasive lionfish in the Gulf of Mexico.

A video produced by Go Fish Productions and posted on YouTube by Courtland Hunt shows the converted handgun's success at killing lionfish at point-blank range.

According to the video post, the idea started as an experiment to see if he could fire a handgun underwater.but "evolved into much more with the right people involved." Hunt, while under the supervision of gun shop Airborne Arms, Inc. of Plant City and parts supplied by Lone Wolf Glock Parts modified the weapon to include a longer barrel and non-toxic lead free ammunition.

While the lionfish is considered a highly destructive species to our marine ecosystem and bounties have been offered in annual lionfish hunts sponsored by the Florida FIsh and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the sport killing of lionfish by unconventional means provoked some YouTube and Facebook commenters to question firing ammunition in the direction of coral reefs.

Some commenters also jokingly referred to potential backlash from the animal rights community, though as of Friday there were no comments supporting the lionfish in this battle between nature and man.

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Swedish town vows to protect giant Christmas goat - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

- 21 September 2016



This has become a familiar sight for the town's residents each Christmas

Image copyrightPER-ERIK JADERBERG/AFP/Getty Images

A Swedish town famous for its Christmas tradition of erecting a giant straw goat has said extra efforts will be made to protect the attraction from arsonists this year.

Yule goats are a Scandinavian tradition, and a huge version has appeared in the town of Gavle every year since 1966. But despite pulling in the crowds, the goat has regularly met a fiery fate. It has been destroyed on 34 occasions, including last year when it survived Christmas, only to be doused with petrol and set alight on 27 December.

Now, councillors are determined that the goat's 50th anniversary remains flame-free. The town is upping this year's Christmas celebration budget by 850,000 kroner ($99,000; £76,000), and some of that cash will go on extra security, the Gefle Dagblad newspaper reports. "There will be more guards - we have said that we should try to have a 'goat guarantee' on the first weekend," says councillor Helene Akerlind.

As The Local points out, the straw goat has become quite a celebrity, even having its own Twitter account with nearly 9,000 followers.

Despite the councillors' security plans, a poll by the SVT public broadcaster suggests some Swedes don't hold out much hope. Half of those responding think it's going to burn anyway, compared to 31% who are confident it'll survive - the rest either don't know, or don't care.

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Goats guests of honor at Prague rooftop reception

yahoo.com

REUTERS October 20, 2016

Reuters



Culture activist Ondrej Kobza (R) stands next to a pair of goats as he speaks to visitors on the terrace of a rooftop community garden and cafe atop the Lucerna Palace in Prague, Czech Republic, October 20, 2016. REUTERS/David W Cerny

PRAGUE (Reuters) - Two goats wander across the roof of Prague's famous Lucerna Palace - the first beneficiaries of a new push to open up public spaces high above the packed streets of a crowded city.

The animals were guests of honor at the opening of a terrace on the city-centre landmark, whose lower floors hold the Czech Republic's oldest cinema, a theater, a music venue, restaurants and an ornate shopping arcade.

"I brought the goats ... to have an atmosphere of the farm here, to communicate the idea that roofs should get green," said the project's manager, activist Ondrej Kobza.

"Our goal is to have a community garden here, so that people could raise tomatoes, for example," added Kobza, who has rented a 1,000-square meter space on top of the building completed in 1921 by the grandfather of late President Vaclav Havel.

(Reporting by Jiri Skacel; Writing by Robert Muller; Editing by Andrew Heavens)

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Sheriff's office: Arkansas man charged with arson, says God told him to burn home

arkansasonline.com

By Brandon Riddle

This article was published September 21, 2016 at 4:08 p.m.



PHOTO BY

scott-g-willett-25-of-gassville

BAXTER COUNTY JAIL

Scott G. Willett, 25, of Gassville

A Baxter County man is accused of intentionally setting fire to a house he lived at, telling authorities that a higher power had influenced him, according to the sheriff's office.

Scott G. Willett, 25, of Gassville faces one felony count of arson, a class A felony, after authorities responded to the fire at 11:49 a.m. Sept. 5 at 249 Wildcat Shoals Road, a news release states.

Willett initially told investigators that he had first learned of the blaze after leaving and returning to the home later in the day to find firefighters at the scene, according to the sheriff's office.

A neighbor later told authorities that Willett could be seen on surveillance camera at the property that morning.

The footage showed smoke coming from the back side of the home near the master bedroom around 30 seconds after Willett left the home around 11:36 a.m.

When shown the video, he confessed to starting the fire, which is owned by his mother, according to the sheriff's office.

"God told me to," Willett told investigators.

Willett, who was already jailed on unrelated misdemeanor charges, remained at the Baxter County jail in lieu of $75,000 bond as of Wednesday afternoon, records show.

He has an appearance scheduled for Thursday in Baxter County Circuit Court.

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'God told man to start digging hole 18 years ago' - and he hasn't stopped since

19:28, 27 Sep 2016 Updated 20:12, 27 Sep 2016 By Mirror.co.uk

mirror.co.uk



A man claims God told him to start digging a hole 18 years ago, and he literally hasn't stopped since.

Santiago Sanchez, 69, says he regards it as the Lord's work and he devotes every waking hour to the project.

The pensioner heads to the tunnel in the city of Berlin, in the western El Salvador department of Usulutan, at around 3 AM.

And every time he emerges he is carrying around 90 pounds of rock, stones and debris, following what God told him.

During an interview with Univision journalist Ernesto Rivas, Sanchez explained: "What I am doing is a spiritual revelation from God."



CEN

Santiago, the digger, heads back to the tunnel every morning

It is no easy task, and the journalist who went into the tunnel to have a look confessed that by the time he got halfway, was struggling to breathe and had to leave quickly.

"That was however no surprise to Santiago who said: "Only I am allowed to go to the end, because I am God's tunnel digger. Nobody else is allowed to go there."

He doesn't know where the tunnel is going
He descends in into the depths

Despite his conviction that he is following God's orders, he has many critics and many more who laugh at what he is doing.

His wife, named Isabel Ventura, said that "there are people who say that he is crazy" but he answers that "no one knows what God is going to demand from you."

Because nobody else other than Santiago has ever been to the end, he is the only one who knows how far it actually goes but after 18 years, it is believed to be some way.

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What happened to Gourock's 'infamous' Big Yellow Kettle?

scotsman.com



Thursday 27 October 2016

The Glasgow Garden Festival in 1988 is remembered fondly by many with creations designed specifically for the occasion, however, in Inverclyde, there was one that divided opinion.

The Yellow Kettle in Gourock, sometimes referred to as the Big Yellow Kettle, was shipped to Gourock in 1994, where it remained for three years in an attempt to draw tourists into the town.

The kettle, which prompted significant debate, was attached to the Tourist Information office in the town and was a landmark that divided the community.

While others loved the kettle for being a tourist attraction and a quirk of the coastal town, some were not fond of what was deemed an 'eyesore' that stood out for all the wrong reasons.

However, while the kettle did divide opinions, the creation was quickly forgotten by most when it was removed after three years in the town as part of a revamp.

Numerous forums about Glasgow's past have sought answers about the Yellow Kettle, with many sharing images to try and find out what happened to the sculpture.

Initially it was believed that the kettle was moved to a council storage unit where it was to be revamped, but the reality of the kettle is significantly bleaker.

Falling into disrepair (with legend stating that the roof blew off) the kettle was removed from the Gourock pier and dismantled.

Although the kettle that aimed to put Gourock on the map is not fondly remembered by all, almost twenty years on, it is still a talking point.

Mission accomplished.

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CREEPYLA
Creepy LA: The Los Angeles Halloween Blog



Gram Parsons memorial outside room #8 at the Joshua Tree Inn

Gram Parson's Death Trip and Everlasting Grievous Angel

October 18, 2016

I don't know if anyone has ever had a more loyal friend than Gram Parsons had in Phil Kaufman. Sometime in early 1973, Parsons told Kaufman that if he ever died he wanted to have his body cremated in Joshua Tree National Park.

Flash forward a few months later, and there Kaufman was, driving a hearse with Parson's body in the back, on the way to Joshua Tree. Never mind the hearse was borrowed and the corpse stolen. Worried he was being followed, Kaufman dumped the coffin along the side of the road in Joshua Tree, tossed some gasoline on it, lit Parsons afire, and fled.

Gram Parsons was a country-rock musician hated that term "country-rock" and preferred to claim his sound his own, calling it "Cosmic American Music." H played with Byrds, hung out on the road with Rolling Stones, and gained his own fame recording with his own band The Flying Burrito Brother and with singer Emmylou Harris on his post-humously released solo album, *Grievous Angel*.

On September 19, 1973, while staying in room #8 of the Joshua Tree Inn, Parsons died of an overdose of whiskey, cocaine, and morphine. He was 26 years old.

Parson's father, via phone, arranged for his son's body to be delivered to Los Angeles International Airport, and then flown to New Orleans for a private burial. By the time Kaufman, Parson's road manager, learned of this, the body was in a truck on its way to LAX.

Kaufman borrowed a hearse from a friend who mainly used it for camping, and enlisted Parson's assistant, Michael Martin, to help chase down Parson's corpse. Lacking a proper suit to look like anything like a mortuary attendant, Kaufman and Martin put on their country best, including cowboy boots and a cowboy hat, tossed a couple bottles of Jack Daniels and a case of beer in the hearse, and hauled it down through Yucca Valley.

Parsons and his coffin were just about to be moved from a delivery truck onto a plane when Kaufman arrived with his hearse on the tarmac. A police officer watched as Kaufman, still loaded from liquor, told an airline employee that the Parsons family had a change of plans: the body was to be taken back to Joshua Tree for a funeral. Kaufman signed off on some paperwork, and, along with Martin and the police officer, moved the coffin into the hearse, and driving stopped only momentarily after hitting a wall. The police officer just laughed.

Kaufman and Martin drove back to Joshua Tree. Paranoid they were being followed, possibly due to the alcohol, or the plain fact they had just stolen a corpse, he constantly kept an eye on his rear view to see if he was being followed. (Technically and legally, though, it should be noted, there is no law against stealing a corpse.)

Stopping near Cap Rock in Joshua Tree, Kaufman dragged the coffin out of the hearse. He poured five gallons of gasoline on Parson's naked corpse, and lit it, causing a giant fireball to burst into the air of desert park. Fearing they'd be spotted, Kaufman and Martin hopped into the hearse and barreled it back to town, so recklessly that oncoming traffic had to move off the road.

And, indeed, Kaufman and Martin were right to fear being caught. Several witnesses helped identify them, and within a week Kaufman was arrested at his home in Van Nuys. Martin turned himself in at a police station in Venice. Their crime: stealing a coffin. They were fined $300.

A makeshift memorial was placed at Cap Rock to commemorate Gram Parsons, which was later moved just outside his room at the Joshua Tree Inn. Regardless, fans still leave tributes at Cap Rock to this day, which park rangers routinely clean up.

The Joshua Tree Inn, however, has embraced this legend, renting out Gram Parson's room #8 at $109 per night. Inside the lobby, several board games are available for guests to entertain themselves, and among them, a Ouija board.

Margo, a representative for the Joshua Tree Inn, tells us, "As for ghost sightings, our guests have many stories over the years. many have been recorded in our room #8 journals." Among them, "The mirror moving on its own, or knocks at the door when no one is in sight are the most common." She also says that staff have reported strange voices at the inn, and doors opening and locking mysteriously from time to time.

Phil Kaufman has written about this and his life as a road manager in an autobiography, Road Mangler Deluxe. In what could serve as a suiting CreepyLA coincidence, Kaufman claims that he used to party with Charles Manson at a friends home next to the LaBianca home, where Manson's cult members (and possibly Manson himself) would later brutally murder the residents. Kaufman later spent time in prison with Manson, and produced one of his music albums.

We've reached out to Kaufman with one lingering question about his theft of Gram Parson's body – what ever happened to the hearse? We'll update this post if we find out. Alas, we were sad to hear that in 2015 he had suffered serious injuries in a motorcycle accident near his home in Nashville. We hope he's doing well.



Joshua Tree Inn

Joshua Tree Inn

Ask for room #8 to stay with the spirit of Gram Parsons

Room 8, the Gram Parsons room, at the Joshua Tree Inn



Ask for room #8 to stay with the spirit of Gram Parsons


Room 8, the Gram Parsons room, at the Joshua Tree Inn

Gram



Gram Parsons memorial outside room #8 at the Joshua Tree Inn

Parsons memorial outside room #8 at the Joshua Tree Inn



Gram Parsons memorial outside room #8 at the Joshua Tree Inn

Gram Parsons memorial outside room #8 at the Joshua Tree Inn

David Markland

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Feisty grandmother beats off 'rapist' as he attacked her

17:10 EST, 19 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

'I bet he won't break into nobody else's house': Feisty grandmother fights off 'grim reaper rapist' by beating him unconscious with a beer stein and crow bar stashed beneath her bed

- **Angela Ferguson was asleep in her Chicago home when she was attacked**
- **Her neighbor Dorval Grice allegedly climbed on top of her demanding sex**
- **Called himself the 'grim reaper' while tearing off her underwear, she said**
- **Ferguson, 58, fought him off with a beer stein on her bedside table**
- **She beat him with a crow bar until he lost consciousness in her bedroom**

By Jennifer Smith For Dailymail.com

A grandmother fought off an attempted rapist who called himself the 'grim reaper' by beating him unconscious with a beer stein and crow bar.

Angela Ferguson, 58, was asleep in her home in the Near West Side of Chicago, Illinois, when her 30-year-old neighbor Dorval Grice allegedly crept in to her bedroom to attack her on Monday at 6.30am.

She claimed he lunged himself on top of her, tore her underwear off and demanded sex, all the while shouting: 'Don't look at me b****, I'm the grim reaper'.

Ferguson beat him with a beer stein and later used a crowbar to knock him unconscious before police arrived at the scene.

Scroll down for video



Angela Ferguson, 58, was asleep in her home in Near West Side, Chicago, when she was allegedly attacked by a rapist who climbed through the window

Grice, she said, had climbed through a broken window in her bedroom to attack her.

He grabbed her hair and punched her repeatedly in the face, she said.

'All I know is, somebody grabbed my hair. He kept saying: "I'm the grim reaper. Don't look at me b****, I'm the grim reaper."

'So he kept hitting me in my face and doing blows to the head,' Ferguson told Fox News.

She grabbed a beer stein from her bedside table and smashed him over the head with it, pushing him out of the room when he lost his control of her.

When he forced his way back in, Ferguson retrieved a steel crowbar stashed beneath her bed to beat him further.

Ferguson hit neighbor Dorval Grice (right, sporting an eye band-aid after the incident) repeatedly with a crow bar until he fell unconscious

The woman was at home in Near West Side, Chicago, on Monday morning when the alleged sex attack took place

'I just kept hitting him, kept hitting him, hitting him,' she said, reenacting how she fought the man off.

Grice eventually lost consciousness, she said, slumped in a pool of blood on her bedroom floor.

Ms Ferguson, who claimed to have known the man since he was a baby, then went on to the street to call the police.

She said she had to phone three times before officers attended the scene despite living a block and a half from Chicago Police Department's 12th precinct.

Explaining how she was able to fight the man off, the woman credited her tough upbringing and boxing skills.

'You are not going to put Angie out. I bet he won't break into nobody else's house.'

Grice was charged with home invasion and criminal sexual assault.

Ferguson credited her tough upbringing and boxing skills with her impressive defense

Comments (

Buccaneer10, Wales, United Kingdom, 2 days ago

Good for her. I hope some of them pain him for life.

Idontlikeusernames, San Fran, United States, 2 days ago

Way to go grandma, and sad she has known this man since he was a child.

lasvegascentennial, Las Vegas, 2 days ago

So glad you are safe! Don't mess with Grandma Angie - she'll knock you out! <ding-ding-ding>

Justus Ben, SCV, United States, 2 days ago

tough old lady

Roberta, San Francisco, United States, 2 days ago

You go Grandma! Thank God nothing happened to her!

smookie, Los Angeles, United States, 2 days ago

Don't you break in on Angela. She'll take it to yo' azz, boi!

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Grave of the Lady in Red

atlasobscura.com

The body of an unidentified woman, visible through a glass coffin, was discovered by accident.







In summer of 1969 farmhands were digging on Egypt Plantation in Cruger, Mississippi when the backhoe operator felt a crunch. Just three feet beneath the topsoil, he had hit a very, very old coffin—made of cast-iron and glass. The body inside was visible.



It was a young woman wearing a red velvet dress, white gloves, and square-toed boots from sometime in the previous century. The body wasn't decomposed, as one might expect for a corpse in such antiquated garb. The coffin had been filled with preservative alcohol and sealed, and the woman inside looked almost as she did the day she died, her hair a bright auburn and her skin pale white. The glass had shattered when the backhoe hit it, and the alcohol seeped into the ground around it, exposing the body to the elements after a century of rest.

Local historians have attempted to source the woman's identity without any luck. Clues from her clothing and the coffin she was found in indicate she died before the Civil War. She was reburied in Lexington's Odd Fellows Cemetery with a marker dating her estimated birthdate as 1835 and her death date as 1969, the year she was discovered.

No one is sure about who the Lady in Red was or why she was buried in a shallow, unmarked grave. Some speculate that the coffin might have fallen off a wagon and never reached its final burial site. Others predict that she was a passenger on a paddleboat who died while traveling the nearby Yazoo River. Her identity may never be discovered, but if anything that's only fueled the intrigue surrounding the Lady in Red.

Sources

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The Great Migration of the Bani Hilal - AramcoWorld

AramcoWorld

- November/December 2016 PDF
- Written by Caroline Stone // Illustrated by Ivy Johnson



The Great Migration of the Bani Hilal

Then the poet would begin to recite in a wonderfully sweet tone the doings of Abu Zayd, Khalifa and Dhi'ab, and his hearers would remain silent except when ecstasy enlivened them or desire startled them.
—TAHA HUSSEIN, *THE DAYS: AN EGYPTIAN CHILDHOOD*, 1932

These words come at the beginning of Taha Hussein's auto-biography, where he tells us how he would creep out of his parents' house to listen to tales that had held audiences across the Arab world spellbound for centuries: *Sirat Bani Hilal—the Romance of the People of the Crescent Moon*. For Hussein, living in a village in Upper Egypt and blind since childhood, the adventures of the tribe that had emigrated from Arabia 1,000 years before opened up a new and wonderful world. He was to become one of Egypt's most influential writers and educators.

Sadly, this centuries-old oral tradition, passed on from one generation to the next, is now almost at an end. The café and market-square patrons, who once listened enraptured, have found new entertainments, and the few remaining *rawis* — reciters—are very old and have no successors.

To a limited extent—as with the Arthurian legends—the old stories have transferred to new media. There have also been efforts to preserve and record versions of the epic in the Arab world, and in 2003 the United Nations declared it one of the masterpieces of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Like most of the great Arab epics as well as those from Eu-rope and the Byzantine Empire, there is a loose historical basis for these stories. Minor characters from the original sources were often promoted to heroes, and actual events were modi-fied to suit the narrative or resonate with a particular audience.

Yet in a world of widespread illiteracy, the recitation of these epics gave ordinary people a sense of history while inculcating virtues such as courage, pride and—when necessary—vengeance. Cunning was valued, in the sense of outwitting one's opponent, much like "wily Odysseus" in Homer's Odyssey—in contrast to European chivalric romances in which cunning was often a villain's mark.



The *Sirat* is divided into three parts: the tribe's origins and journey out of Arabia, its time in Egypt and Syria, and what is often called "the Westering of the Bani Hilal," that is, the tribe's invasion of North Africa from Egypt to the Atlantic. Many versions of the story describe a prolonged drought in Najd in Central Arabia, in which herds died, bringing famine. Tribes cast lots to determine which would stay and which would go in search of new grazing lands. Over time there were in fact several waves of migrations, but for the purposes of the romance, they were all attributed to the Bani Hilal. What began as a struggle for survival turned gradually into politics: Early sources say that when the tribes reached Egypt, the Fatimid ruler loosed them on the Zenata Berber dynasty of Tunisia. This ridded Egypt of what the Fatimids regarded as a dangerous and destructive presence and punished allies who had become rivals.

Three main characters who reappear in almost every ver-sion are Abu Zayd, Khalifa and Dhi'ab. Khalifa al-Zanati at least is a known historical figure, chief general of the Berber ruler of Tlemcen (now in Algeria), although he appears in different guises in different versions of the epic in order to appeal to the local audience. Ibn Khaldun, who in the 14th century wrote down the first surviving passages from the *Sirat* that are very similar to versions collected in the early 20th century in the same region, commented on the wide variations in plot, setting and style.

In addition to these three, the *Sirat* has a huge cast, which also varies—and sometimes the same name is used in different places for different characters. Al-Khadra, for example, can variously be Dhi'ab's prized white mare, Abu Zayd's mother or a slave girl. None of this would have been confusing to listeners, because they would have been listening to one coherent, local tale. It only becomes complicated when discussing the *Sirat* as a whole.

Extremely popular in North and West Africa, the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula, the *Sirat Bani Hilal* does not seem to have traveled east—unlike the I*skandar Nama* (*The Story of Alexander the Great*), which was a favorite in Iran, Afghanistan and as far afield as Malaysia and Indonesia, or the *Sirat Hamza*, the legendary adventures of the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. Nor does it seem to have entered the Ottoman repertoire: Considering the Turks' protracted political problems with the Bedouin, stories of Bedouin conquests may have held scant appeal.

1836, Cairo

Edward Lane, in his *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, first published in 1836, devotes three chapters to "Public Recitations of Romances."

The number of these *Sho'ara* [poets] in Cairo is about fifty; and they recite nothing but the adventures related in the romance of Aboo-Zeyd…. The *Sha'er* [poet] always commits his subject to memory, and recites without a book. The poetry he chants; and after every verse he plays a few notes in a viol which has but a single cord, and which is called "the poet's viol," or the "Aboo-Zeydee viol" from its only being used in these recitations.

The geographical spread produced some truly exotic variants, for example, one episode from Sub-Saharan Africa in which Abu Zayd battles a giant crocodile. Tales collected in Bornu, Nigeria, are so far from the originals that they are hard to recognize apart from some of the names. Individual reciters took the story in whatever direction they felt would appeal. In one Syrian version, the *Sirat* is

set in the 14th century, the time of Amir Timur (known in the West as Tamer-lane), and the Bani Hilal go on to conquer India. In another version from Egypt, they ex-change letters with the King of China.

In an episode recorded in the mid-20th century in Dhofar, in southwestern Oman, Abu Zayd has an adventure clearly adapted from “St. George and the Dragon” although, by now an old man, he neither marries the princess he has rescued nor takes over the kingdom: Instead, in some versions of the story, he continues on his way and ends his days as a holy man. Dragons are rare in North African and Arabian folklore, so scholars believe this story most probably crossed from Ethiopia, where St. George is known and much esteemed.

Elsewhere, “modern” elements crept in: muskets, Turkish soldiers, Genoese merchants and even prickly pears, which were introduced from Mexico in the 16th century. In a 19th-century version from Beirut, Abu Zayd was bullied at school for being black and presumably illegitimate: Of course he puts his tormentors in their places. Although chess was known in the Arab world from early Silk Road times, scenes with the heroine Jazia playing chess, or of Bedouin writing letters, show ur-ban norms continuing to modernize the tales.

There are also additional, subtle differences. Giovanni Canova, collecting tales in Yemen in the late 1980s and ’90s, pointed out that distinct from Syrian, Egyptian and North African versions, in Yemen the heroes of the *Sirat Bani Hilal* were praised more for their shrewdness and wiliness than for their feats of arms. These were themes that harked back to pre-Islamic times, and the noble and chivalric deeds that appealed to the Mediterranean world and that became characteristic also of European folk epics and cycles such as the King Arthur tales were definitely fewer.



The Birth of Abu Zayd

Recorded by Abderrahman Guiga, circa 1925, Takrouna, Tunisia

From this marriage with Amir Rizq a daughter was born to whom the Sharif gave the name Shiha. Then the young woman ceased to bear children. Desperate, one day she said to herself: “My last hope is to offer a plate of couscous to the birds of the air. Perhaps they will intercede with Allah on my behalf, so that he gives me a male child.” She set down the platter deep the desert and hid herself. The first bird to alight on the plate was a crow. At once, she uttered this prayer:

“Allah, my Lord, you who save the beasts from certain death by making the rain fall Give me a son, just like this bird and with the same virtues So that strokes of his sword will cause the blood of his enemies to flow.”

Her prayers were heard and she gave birth to a child blacker than the night, but with the same features as a white child.

An interesting feature of several of the Arab epics is that the leading hero Abu Zayd is often said to have been “black”—in spite of the fact that the stories evolved in areas where blacks of African origin were a small minority.

Equally interesting are the portrayals of women. In epic after epic, women participate in tribal councils, decide policy and even lead troops. The main heroine of the *Sirat Bani Hilal,* Jazia, for example, is not only befittingly beautiful, but she also often shares power with Abu Zayd, and she is considered as “one whose words are worth hearing.” There are episodes in which she takes up weapons to defend the tribe and even, in one version, to revenge herself on Dhi’ab for divorcing her, by challenging him to a duel—in which she dies.

Other popular episodes, however, tended to reinforce the medieval view, shared by the Christian as well as the Muslim world, of women as dangerous. For example, in one episode, a Berber princess seduces Yunis, a young Hilali, and keeps him prisoner in Tunis, “the city of high towers.” In another, Jazia lets down her magnificent hair so that it blows against the thorn bushes because she knows that Khalifa loves her too much to make her cut

it, and the resulting delay while it is disentangled is enough to give her own people (the Bani Hilal) the advantage in the attack.

Although many of the historical events were adapted to suit local tastes in plot, the basic storyline re-mains fact: The Bani Hilal were Arab Bedouin pastoralists who brought with them Islam—then still a fairly new religion—to an area that was predominantly ethnic Berber farmers, and religiously largely Jewish and Christian. The conflicts that resulted were re-corded also by authors such as Ibn Khaldun. Towns and irrigation systems were destroyed; olive groves and or-chards were cut down for firewood or killed off by goats; and good arable land was overgrazed. Much of the area between Tripoli in Libya and Tunis, and west into Algeria, which was once a breadbasket for the Roman Empire, lay abandoned. The conflict between the original inhabitants, who, at least along the coast, lived in cities or were settled farmers sharing pan-Mediterranean culture, and the nomads seizing land for grazing their herds was reflected repeatedly—although in different versions and from different points of view.

For example, one episode relates how the members of the tribe are starving—they need water and pasture. Khalifa al-Zanati—in this version the elderly Berber ruler of Tunis—has heard of Jazia’s beauty and demands her as the price for allowing the tribes to enter his lands with their herds. Her husband Dhi’ab is persuaded to save the tribe by divorcing her. Jazia goes to live with Khalifa and bears him two children, but at last her longing for the desert overwhelms her and, by a series of tricks, she escapes and returns to the Bani Hilal.



There is another version of the same story, but told presumably for a Berber audience: Khalifa is a young and hand-some Berber warrior from Tunis who is out searching for lost camels when he encounters Jazia and other young women of the Bani Hilal. She falls in love with him and arranges a meeting place. When he arrives, he is challenged by the men of the Bani Hilal who had also asked for her hand and whom she had refused. Khalifa fights them all, defeats them and flees with Jazia’s help. They marry and have two children.

Nevertheless, cultural differences eventually lead to quarrels, and she returns to the tribe, where she marries Dhi'ab.

The location of stories also shifts. In the earliest versions, Khalifa al-Zanati is not Tunisian, but a Himyarite from Yemen and, more strangely yet, the offspring of a man and a female *djinn* (spirit). As such, he can only be killed by a thrust directly into his eyes—a detail that survived even when the story moved to North Africa, where it was a favorite motif in the much later Tunisian prints illustrating the episode. In yet other accounts, on the way out of Najd, Jazia is abducted by a sorcerer and rescued by Dhi'ab, whom she does not initially marry because of his low birth; in North African versions, however, the episode takes place in the Maghrib and the sorcerer is a merchant.

Traditionally, the *Sirat Bani Hilal* was performed with alternating passages in verse and prose, and often with a musical accompaniment, as described by Edward Lane, who lived in Cairo in the early 19th century. There were two types of reciters: those who sat in cafés and who might use a manuscript, and itinerants who were generally illiterate. Different names are used for the performers in different countries: *sha'ir* in Egypt (or *rawi* for the more formal storytellers); *hakawati* in Syria and Palestine; *qisa khoun* in Iraq; and *fdawi* in Tunisia.

Although the recitation of stories such as the *Sirat Bani Hilal* is most often associated with urban cafés or with entertainment on festive occasions such as Ramadan or weddings, the older tradition also persisted: Isma'il Pasha, while campaigning in the Sudan in the mid-19th century, is reported to have had episodes recited to his troops to inspire them to courage and chivalry.

Horses, from Romance to Race Track

In keeping with the Bedouin origins of the *Sirat*, horses are among the few possessions described. Many feuds and quarrels in the tale are connected to prized mounts. Foremost is Dhi'ab's white mare, al-Khadra. In some versions, when al-Khadra is killed in the duel with Khalifa al-Zanati, Dhi'ab holds a magnificent funeral for her and orders a barrow raised over her grave.

It is thus fitting that the first translation into English of an episode of the *Bani Hilal* was the *The Celebrated Romance of the Stealing of the Mare*, translated in 1892 by Lady Anne Blunt and put into verse by her husband, Wilfrid: It was they who also founded the Crabbet Arabian Stud, and their importation of Arab horses became responsible for most of the world's top thoroughbred bloodlines today.

Bertrand Thomas, who crossed Saudi Arabia's great Rub' al-khali (Empty Quarter) in 1930 and 1931, made frequent references to the Bani Hilal, both the historic tribe and the *Sirat*, and he observed Bedouin of that region regarding it to be history. He wrote that episodes were still being told around campfires. Another Englishman, Charles Doughty, noted the same in *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, published in 1888. He mentioned being shown a rock-cut figure in Najd that was Abu Zayd and "beside him is a lesser, perhaps female figure, which they call 'Alia his wife."

It is very hard for anyone to tell to what extent the *Sirat Bani Hilal*—or, indeed, any of the famous folk epics—still exist today in oral form. Alfred Bel, who recorded tales in Algeria in 1902, said that the tradition was already in decline and that the stories should be collected as soon as possible. Since then the situation has only deteriorated further.

In his book *The Last Storytellers* (Tauris, 2011), Richard Hamilton wrote, “[T]here were 18 storytellers in Marrakech [in the 1970s]; now there are only half a dozen, and they are old men who have almost retired, leaving no apprentices.” And these were not, Hamilton recorded, men who knew the *Sirat Bani Hilal* by heart, but men who read aloud, over many months, a very long, printed version, translating it into local dialect, for their audience was not only mostly illiterate but also did not understand spoken classical Arabic.

There are numerous reasons for this decline: the sheer effort in learning one of the long, complicated texts; the insecurity of the work, which traditionally was not prestigious, especially for the wandering storytellers; changes in wedding customs (a popular storytelling occasion); and, of course, the now nearly omnipresent challenge from television in cafés.



Indeed, the people who seem most interested in sampling “local culture” are tourists, but they typically do not know Arabic, and their attention span is brief. Some large hotels have hired men to put on picturesque costumes and give 10-minute excerpts of popular episodes with a musical accompaniment and perhaps a translator—but this has little relation to the original art form.

Just as the tales of the Knights of the Round Table are no longer sung to the harp in baronial halls in Britain but are known through books, films, television series and even videogames, so with the *Sirat Bani Hilal*. They have been preserved in films—for example, in the Egyptian production *Abu Zayd al-Hilali*, with Jazia played by Omar Sharif’s wife, Faten Hamama; the cartoon strip that appeared in the Tuni-sian newspaper *Biladi*; or a number of excerpts available on YouTube.

Nevertheless, renewed interest in traditional culture in the Arab world, research by scholars such as the late distinguished Egyptian poet Abdel Rahman el-Abrudi, who collected versions of the *Sirat Bani Hilal* in Egypt and across North Africa, as well as initiatives such as that of unesco and the Sirat Bani Hilal Digital Archive at Cornell University in New York state, all ensure that the epic that entertained the Arab world for the better part of a millennium will be, if not continued, at least preserved.

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Gun disguised as cane nets prison for 2 weapons dealers

ap.org

Oct. 16, 2016 12:18 PM EDT

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP) — Two firearms dealers who ran a store in the Florida Keys have been sentenced to prison for illegally possessing a gun disguised as a walking cane.

Court documents show that 52-year-old Thomas Joseph Willi and 37-year-old Jarvis Nelson Osorio will each serve more than two years in prison. Their store on Big Pine Key, Outbreak Ordnance, was fined $500,000.

The sentences last week came after Willi and Osorio pleaded guilty to illegally receiving and possessing a .38-caliber gun that looks like a walking cane. Such concealable or particularly dangerous weapons are tightly controlled under the 1934 National Firearms Act.

The men were initially charged with illegal possession of other guns disguised as items such as pens and flashlights but pleaded guilty to a single count.

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The Traditions and Customs of Guy Fawkes Day in Dorset

blogspot.co.uk

http://darkdorset.blogspot.co.uk/2015/11/the-traditions-and-customs-of-guy.html



Dark Dorset Online Scrapbook is an archive of current and past events relating to local history, folklore and mysteries that can be discovered in the English county of Dorset.

Thursday, 5 November 2015



Today is Guy Fawkes Day, also known as *Guy Fawkes Night, Bonfire Night, Cracker Night, Fireworks Night, Bommy Night*, this is an annual celebration of the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot on the 5th November 1605. In which a number of Catholic conspirators, including Guy Fawkes, attempted to blow-up the Houses of Parliament in London.

Dorset Folklorist, John Symonds Udal mentions the Dorset traditions of 'Guy Faux Night' in his book 'Dorsetshire Folklore' published in 1922:

"GUY FAUX DAY (5th November)

The Guy Faux Day celebrations by fireworks and bonfires have always been very popular in Dorsetshire, particularly in the county town, where on more than one occasion disturbances have taken place because the populace has considered that its ancient privileges had been interfered with or its looked-for amusements on this night curtailed.

I well remember on one occasion some thirty or forty years ago in Dorchester when the military had to be called out in order to assist the civic authorities in quelling the riots. These celebrations appear now to be shorn of much of their former importance and, apparently, significance.

Barnes, in his "Fore-say" says that *"the 5th of November still gathers in some parishes of Dorset its fire-wielding youths to celebrate Guy Faux's night, by flaring bonfires and flying fireworks, far more for fun than Faux, and rather as fire-worshippers than politicians"*. He himself gives us a dialect poem on "Guy Faux's Night".

Guy Faux's night, dost know, we chaps,
A-putten on our woldest traps,
Went up the highest o' the knaps,
An' meäde up such a vier!
An' thou an' Tom wer all we miss'd,
Vor if a sarpent had a-hiss'd
Among the rest in thy sprack vist,

Our fun 'd a-been the higher.

We chaps at hwome, an' Will our cousin,
Took up a half a lwoad o' vuzzen;
An' burn'd a barrel wi' a dozen
O' faggots, till above en
The fleämes, arisèn up so high
'S the tun, did snap, an' roar, an' ply,

Lik' vier in an' oven.

An' zome wi' hissèn squibs did run,
To paÿ off zome what they'd a-done,
An' let em off so loud's a gun
Ageän their smokèn polls;
An' zome did stir their nimble pags
Wi' crackers in between their lags,
While zome did burn their cwoats to rags,

Or wes'cots out in holes.

An' zome o'm's heads lost half their locks,
An' zome o'm got their white smock-frocks
Jist fit to vill the tinder-box,
Wi' half the backs o'm off;
An' Dick, that all o'm vell upon,
Vound woone flap ov his cwoat-taïl gone,
An' tother jist a-hangèn on,
A-zweal'd so black's a snoff.

'Guy Faux's Night' by Rev. William Barnes

Portland Bonfire Custom.

The late Rev. W. K. Kendall once lent me a MS. notebook in which he had recorded a very curious form which the customary bonfire celebration in the Isle of Port-land on the night of 5th November had taken.

When the bonfire was lighted the following custom was observed. A man taking up one of the children in his arms gave the signal, and then all the others followed him in single file round the fire, over which he leaped with the child in his arms. When the fire began to burn low the children also jumped over it. The following doggerel was sung :—

"Wood and straw do burn likewise,
Take care the blankers don't dout your eyes."

This would appear to partake more of the characteristics of the old Midsummer fires."

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

The 5th of November marks the anniversary of two prominent events in English history—the discovery and prevention of the gunpowder treason, and the inauguration of the Revolution of 1688 by the landing of William III in Torbay. In recent years, an additional interest has been attached to the date, from the victory at Inkerman over the Russians, in the Crimea, being gained on this day in 1854.

Like the Bartholomew massacre at Paris in 1572, and the Irish massacre of 1641, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, standing as it were midway, at a distance of about thirty years from each of these events, has been the means of casting much obloquy on the adherents of the Roman Catholic religion. It would, however, be a signal injustice to connect the Catholics as a body with the perpetration of this atrocious attempt, which seems to have been solely the work of some fanatical members of the extreme section of the Jesuit party.

The accession of James I to the throne had raised considerably the hopes of the English Catholics, who, relying upon some expressions which he had made use of while king of Scotland, were led to flatter themselves with the prospect of an unrestricted toleration of the practice of their faith, when he should succeed to the crown of England. Nor were their expectations altogether disappointed. The first year of James's reign shews a remarkable diminution in the amount of fines paid by popish recusants into the royal exchequer, and for a time they seem to have been comparatively unmolested. But such halcyon-days were not to be of long continuance.

The English parliament was determined to discountenance in every way the Roman Catholic religion, and James, whose pecuniary necessities obliged him to court the good-will of the Commons, was forced to comply with their importunities in putting afresh into execution the penal laws against papists. Many cruel and oppressive severities were exercised, and it was not long till that persecution which is said to make 'a wise man mad,' prompted a few fanatics to a scheme for taking summary vengeance on the legislature by whom these repressive measures were authorised.

The originator of the Gunpowder Plot was Robert Catesby, a gentleman of ancient family, who at one period of his life had become a Protestant, but having been reconverted to the Catholic religion, had endeavoured to atone for his apostasy by the fervour of a new zeal. Having revolved in his own mind a project for destroying, at one blow, the King, Lords, and Commons, he communicated it to Thomas Winter, a Catholic gentleman of Worcestershire, who at first expressed great horror, but was afterwards induced to cooperate in the design. He it was who procured the co-adjutorship of the celebrated Guido or Guy Fawkes, who was not, as has sometimes been represented, a low mercenary ruffian, but a gentleman of good family, actuated by a spirit of ferocious fanaticism.

Other confederates were gradually assumed, and in a secluded house in Lambeth, oaths of secrecy were taken, and the communion administered to the conspirators by Father Gerard, a Jesuit, who, however, it is said, was kept in ignorance of the plot. One of the party, named Thomas Percy, a distant relation of the Earl of Northumberland, and one of the gentleman-pensioners at the court of King James, agreed to hire a house adjoining the building where the parliament met, and it was resolved to effect the purpose of blowing the legislature into the air by carrying a mine through the wall. This was in the spring of 1604, but various circumstances prevented the commencement of operations till the month of December of that year.

The Gunpowder Conspirators from a print published immediately after the discovery
In attempting to pierce the wall of the Parliament House, the conspirators found that they had engaged in a task beyond their strength, owing to the immense thickness of the barrier. With an energy, however, befitting a better cause, they continued their toilsome labours; labours the more toilsome to them, that the whole of the confederates were, without exception, gentlemen by birth and education, and totally unused to severe manual exertion.

To avert suspicion while they occupied the house hired by Percy, they had laid in a store of provisions, so that all necessity for going out to buy these was obviated. Whilst in silence and anxiety they plied their task, they were startled one day by hearing, or fancying they heard, the tolling of a bell deep in the ground below the Parliament House. This cause of perturbation, originating perhaps in a guilty conscience, was removed by an appliance of superstition. Holy-water was sprinkled on the spot, and the tolling ceased.

Then a rumbling noise was heard directly over their heads, and the fear seized them that they had been discovered. They were speedily, however, reassured by Fawkes, who, on going out to learn the cause of the uproar, ascertained that it had been occasioned by a dealer in coal, who rented a cellar below the House of Lords, and who was engaged in removing his stock from that place of deposit to another. Here was a golden opportunity for the conspirators. The cellar was forth-with hired from the coal merchant, and the working of the mine abandoned. Thirty-six barrels of gunpowder, which had previously been deposited in a house on the opposite side of the river, were then secretly conveyed into this vault. Large stones and bars of iron were thrown in, to increase the destructive effects of the explosion, and the whole was carefully covered up with fagots of wood.

These preparations were completed about the month of May 1605, and the confederates then separated till the final blow could be struck. The time fixed for this was at first the 3rd of October, the day on which the legislature should meet; but the opening of parliament having been prorogued by the king to the 5th of November, the latter date was finally resolved on.

Extensive preparations had been made during the summer months, both towards carrying the design into execution, and arranging the course to be followed after the destruction of the king and legislative bodies had been accomplished. New confederates

were assumed as participators in the plot, and one of these, Sir Everard Digby, agreed to assemble his Catholic friends on Dunsmore Heath, in Warwickshire, as if for a hunting-party, on the 5th of November.

On receiving intelligence of the execution of the scheme, they would be in full readiness to complete the revolution thus inaugurated, and settle a new sovereign on the throne. The proposed successor to James was Prince Charles, afterwards Charles I, seeing that his elder brother Henry, Prince of Wales, would, it was expected, accompany his father to the House of Lords, and perish along with him. In the event of its being found impossible to gain possession of the person of Prince Charles, then it was arranged that his sister, the Princess Elizabeth, should be seized, and carried off to a place of security. Guy Fawkes was to ignite the gunpowder by means of a slow-burning match, which would allow him time to escape before the explosion, and he was then to embark on board a ship waiting in the river for him, and proceed to Flanders.

The fatal day was now close at hand, but by this time several dissensions had arisen among the conspirators on the question of giving warning to some special friends to absent themselves from the next meeting of parliament. Catesby, the prime mover in the plot, protested against any such communications being made, asserting that few Catholic members would be present, and that, at all events:

'rather than the project should not take effect, if they were as dear unto me as mine own son, they also must be blown up.'

A similar stoicism was not, however, shared by the majority of the con-federates, and one of them at least made a communication, by which the plot was discovered to the government, and its execution prevented.

Great mystery attaches to the celebrated anonymous letter received on the evening of 26th October by Lord Mounteagle, a Roman Catholic nobleman, and brother-in-law of Francis Tresham, one of the conspirators. Its authorship is ascribed, with great probability, to the latter, but strong presumptions exist that it was not the only channel by which the king's ministers received intelligence of the schemes under preparation. It has even been surmised that the letter was merely a blind, concerted by a previous understanding with Lord Mounteagle, to conceal the real mode in which the conspiracy was unveiled. Be this as it may, the communication in question was the only avowed or ascertained method by which the king's ministers were guided in detecting the plot. It seems also now to be agreed, that the common story related of King James's sagacity in deciphering the meaning of the writer of the letter, was merely a courtly fable, invented to flatter the monarch and procure for him with the public the credit of a subtle and far-seeing perspicacity. The enigma, if enigma it really was, had been read by the ministers Cecil and Suffolk, and communicated by them to various lords of the council, several days before the subject was mentioned to the king, who at the time of the letter to Lord Mounteagle being received was absent on a hunting expedition at Royston.

Though the conspirators were made aware, through a servant of Lord Mounteagle, of the discovery which had been made, they nevertheless, by a singular infatuation, continued their preparations, in the hope that the true nature of their scheme had not been unfolded. In this delusion it seems to have been the policy of the government to maintain them to the last. Even after Suffolk, the lord chamberlain, and Lord Mounteagle had

actually, on the afternoon of Monday the 4th November, visited the cellar beneath the House of Lords, and there discovered in a corner Guy Fawkes, who pretended to be a servant of Mr. Percy, the tenant of the vault, it was still determined to persist in the undertaking.

At two o'clock the following morning, a party of soldiers under the command of Sir Thomas Knevett, a Westminster magistrate, visited the cellar, seized Fawkes at the door, and carried him off to Whitehall, where, in the royal bedchamber, he was interrogated by the king and council, and from thence was conveyed to the Tower.

It is needless to pursue further in detail the history of the Gunpowder Plot. On hearing of Fawkes's arrest, the remaining conspirators, with the exception of Tresham, fled from London to the place of rendezvous in Warwickshire, in the desperate hope of organising an insurrection. But such an expectation was vain. Pursued by the civil and military authorities, they were overtaken at the mansion of Holbeach, on the borders of Staffordshire, where Catesby and three others, refusing to surrender, were slain. The remainder, taken prisoners in different places, were carried up to London, tried, and condemned with their associate Guy Fawkes, who from having undertaken the office of firing the train of gunpowder, came to be popularly regarded as the leading actor in the conspiracy. Leniency could not be expected in the circumstances, and all the horrid ceremonies attending the deaths of traitors were observed to the fullest extent. The executions took place on the 30th and 31st of January, at the west end of St. Paul's Churchyard.

Some Catholic writers have maintained the whole Gunpowder Plot to be fictitious, and to have been concocted for state purposes by Cecil. But such a supposition is entirely contrary to all historical evidence. There cannot be a shadow of a doubt, that a real and dangerous conspiracy was formed; that it was very nearly successful; and that the parties who suffered death as participators in it, received the due punishment of their crimes. At the same time, it cannot be denied that a certain amount of mystery envelops the revelation of the plot, which in all probability will never be dispelled.

GUY FAWKE'S DAY

Till lately, a special service for the 5th of November formed part of the ritual of the English Book of Common Prayer; but by a recent ordinance of the Queen in Council, this service, along with those for the Martyrdom of Charles I, and the Restoration of Charles II , has been abolished. The appointment of this day, as a holiday, dates from an enactment of the British parliament passed in January 1606, shortly after the narrow escape made by the legislature from the machinations of Guy Fawkes and his confederates.



Procession of a Guy

That the gunpowder treason, however, should pass into oblivion is not likely, as long as the well-known festival of Guy Fawkes's Day is observed by English juveniles, who still regard the 5th of November as one of the most joyous days of the year. The universal mode of observance through all parts of England, is the dressing up of a scare-crow figure, in such cast-habiliments as can be procured (the head-piece, generally a paper-

cap, painted and knotted with paper strips in imitation of ribbons), parading it in a chair through the streets, and at nightfall burning it with great solemnity in a huge bonfire. The image is supposed to represent Guy Fawkes, in accordance with which idea, it always carries a dark lantern in one hand, and a bunch of matches in the other. The pro-cession visits the different houses in the neighbourhood in succession, repeating the time-honoured rhyme:

' Remember, remember!
The fifth of November,
The Gunpowder treason and plot;
There is no reason
Why the Gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot!'

Numerous variations and additions are made in different parts of the country. Thus in Islip, Oxfordshire, the following lines, as quoted by Sir Henry Ellis in his edition of Brand's Popular Antiquities, are chanted.

'The fifth of November,
Since I can remember,
Gunpowder treason and plot:
This is the day that God did prevent,
To blow up his king and parliament.
A stick and a stake,
For Victoria's sake;
If you won't give me one,
I'll take two:
The better for me,
And the worse for you.'

One invariable custom is always maintained on these occasions—that of soliciting money from the passers-by, in the formula, 'Pray remember Guy!' 'Please to remember Guy!' or 'Please to remember the bonfire!'

In former times, in London, the burning of the effigy of Guy Fawkes on the 5th of November was a most important and portentous ceremony. The bonfire in Lincoln's Inn Fields was conducted on an especially magnificent scale. Two hundred cart-loads of fuel would sometimes be consumed in feeding this single fire, while upwards of thirty 'Guys' would be suspended on gibbets and committed to the flames. Another tremendous pile was heaped up by the butchers in Clare Market, who on the same evening paraded through the streets in great force, serenading the citizens with the famed 'marrow-bone-and-cleaver' music. The uproar throughout the town from the shouts of the mob, the ringing of the bells in the churches, and the general confusion which prevailed, can but faintly be imagined by an individual of the present day.

The ferment occasioned throughout the country by the 'Papal Aggression' in 1850, gave a new direction to the genius of 5th of November revellers. Instead of Guy Fawkes, a figure of Cardinal Wise-man, then recently created 'Archbishop of Westminster' by the

pope, was solemnly burned in effigy in London, amid demonstrations which certainly gave little evidence of any revolution in the feelings of the English people towards the Romish see. In 1857, a similar honour was accorded to Nana Sahib, whose atrocities at Cawnpore in the previous month of July, had excited such a cry of horror throughout the civilised world.

The opportunity also is frequently seized by many of that numerous class in London, who get their living no one exactly knows how, to earn a few pence by parading through the streets, on the 5th of November, gigantic figures of the leading celebrities of the day. These are sometimes rather ingeniously got up, and the curiosity of the passer-by, who stops to look at them, is generally taxed with the contribution of a copper.



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Gang of 70 teens wearing 'Anonymous' masks wreak Halloween havoc

22:53, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 22:54, 1 Nov 2016 By Susie Coen

mirror.co.uk

Halloween gang of 70 teenagers wearing 'Anonymous' masks wreak havoc by tipping cars and hurling fireworks at traffic



Liverpool Echo

A gang of 70 teenagers wearing 'Anonymous' masks caused chaos by tipping cars and hurling fireworks at traffic in a two-night reign of terror.

The gang terrorised drivers and residents in the Wallasey area of Liverpool on Sunday and Monday nights.

On Sunday night a group of about 40 youths were terrorising drivers by barricading roads with barriers stolen from a building site.

They were also throwing fireworks at oncoming traffic in the normally quiet residential area.

The Liverpool Echo reports the gang then flipped two cars.

One resident said: "I was just sat in the front room at about 7pm and I heard a group of kids laughing. I looked out my window and there was about 40 of them and literally as I looked I saw them flip a car."



Liverpool Echo

Dozens of youths blocked off roads and hurled fireworks

Hayley Carr, 24, was "shell shocked" when she found her car had been turned over.

The clinical support worker said: "I bought my car two months ago and today I had to pay £70 to have it scrapped. I can't afford to replace it. Imagine I suffer with depression and this could have tipped me over the edge."

Last night, the gang of kids had grown into a group of around 70 - despite a dispersal zone put in place by police on Sunday.

The group stole barriers again and blocked off parts of several roads.

One resident told the ECHO: "Last night I was driving back and there was a huge group of them throwing fireworks into the road.

"The light was blinding and there was so much smoke it was like pea soup you could hardly see.

"Some cars were spinning around and there were several near crashes and there were children about trick-or-treating with their parents. A car missed a child by inches."

The resident then went to tell the gang that they were putting people's lives in danger. She said the "ringleader" was wearing an Anonymous mask and just did a "silly dance" and shouted verbal abuse at her.

Again the mob moved down to outside the Telegraph Inn pub at about 7pm.



Two cars were flipped by the gang

Liverpool Echo

Miss Carr had gone out to the shop and saw the group of about 70 teenagers. The gang then lobbed a firework at her brother.

Miss Carr said: "The firework hit him in the arm and luckily bounced off him. They were all just laughing and giggling and showed no remorse. It's just awful, we've been here 19 years and I've never seen anything like it. I'm scared to go out at night now."

Another resident, 19, said the group threatened to smash her windows in and stick fireworks through her letterbox. She was so scared, the family barricaded their front door.

She added: "We were panicking all night."

Chief Inspector Georgie Minnery said: "A massive amount of planning and effort has gone into this operation but we are aware of a number of incidents in New Brighton on Sunday evening, which I understand must have been upsetting for residents.

"We had a number of extra resources in the area over the two nights and alongside police officers - youth outreach workers, charity workers, neighbourhood and patrol officers, specialist schools and anti-social behaviour officers were all part of the visible presence in the area."

Ch Insp Minnery added the police need parents to help them prevent crimes like this from happening in the future.

She said: "While we do have extra resources in the area over this period, we cannot tackle this type of behaviour alone and we are asking parents to help keep our communities safe by taking responsibility for their children's whereabouts as we head towards bonfire night.

"Anyone involved in such criminal behaviour could be arrested and receive a fine, a criminal record or even jail time. If your child is under 16 then you will be liable for payment of any fine."

DailyMirror

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Is this a ghostly apparition snapped in disused jail where terrorists were held?

23:36, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 23:37, 1 Nov 2016 By Sarah Scott

mirror.co.uk

Halloween reveller snaps ghostly apparition of young girl in disused jail where terrorists were once held



Belfast Live

This picture was taken just seconds before the spooky one below

After spending Halloween night in a disused prison, Carly Foster excitedly flicked through the pictures she'd taken.

But she froze when she came across one chilling snap.

Standing in the doorway of a cell at Crumlin Road Gaol, in Belfast, appears to be the ghost of a little girl.

The white, shadowy figure can be seen clearly in one picture but in another taken just seconds before, the doorway is empty.

Speaking to Belfast Live , Queens University student Carly said: "I would be quite a sceptical person, that's why I was so taken aback, that's why it freaked me out.

"It was the wing I felt the most weird and unsettled in and it was freezing cold."



Belfast Live

A strange apparition appeared in another picture

Carly, 25, said she was at the back of the paranormal tour group on Monday night - Halloween - with boyfriend Mark Whittle.

And the pictures were not the only freaky thing the pair experienced, she also said a heavy steel door closed on its own accord, there was a strange ringing noise and a lot of activity picked up by the group's EVP and EMF recorders.

Carly Foster and boyfriend Mark Whittle

"I am a bit of a believer now," said Carly, who lives in Belfast.

"The two children the tour guides talked about were a girl called Isabelle and a boy, it was her name which was said when the recorder went crazy.

"When he called the boy's name nothing happened and then this shows up on the pictures."



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Belfast Live

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Serial killer-obsessive guilty of stabbing her best friend

06:50 EST, 12 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Girl, 14, obsessed by serial killers is found guilty of trying to kill her best friend at school because she 'wanted to do something sensational and avoid a 9-5 life'

- **Youngster became fascinated with serial killers and US school shootings**
- **She told friend to meet her before school so she could give her a present**
- **The victim narrowly avoided being fatally stabbed in the ensuing attack**
- **She admitted wounding but a jury found her guilty of attempted murder**

By Richard Spillett, Crime Correspondent For Mailonline

A schoolgirl obsessed with serial killers and school shootings has been found guilty of the attempted murder of her best friend.

The pupil, who was aged 14 at the time, lured her victim to a quiet corner of their Hampshire school grounds with the promise of giving her a present before stabbing her on April 25.

The defendant told the court she had planned to do something 'sensational' so that she would 'stand out' from others and not have a 'nine-to-five' life 'mapped out' for her.

Wearing a white shirt, she closed her eyes as the verdict was announced today and fought back tears as she was led from the court.



The shocking case has been heard at Winchester Crown Court over the past week

The defendant, now 15, who had researched fatal stab wounds, denied intending to kill her victim but was found guilty by a jury in less than three hours.

She had admitted that she had been fascinated with serial killers and had even produced a fashion GCSE project based on American Ted Bundy.

She had also planned to slit the throats of her mother and brother while they slept and, the court heard, she had produced a journal, which she later burned, with a plan for a school shooting which included a 'kill list' of 60 people.

She had previously pleaded guilty to unlawful wounding and possession of a bladed article on school premises at Winchester Crown Court.

Describing the attempted murder, prosecutor James Newton-Price said: 'She sent a text message to her friend asking her to meet her at school in the morning before classes started.

The girl was interested in serial killers, particularly the US murderer Ted Bundy

'She said she had a present to give her friend but the only present she had in mind was to stab her with a knife she had taken from her kitchen.

'She lured her to a quiet location behind the science block just before 8.30am when the school bell rang.

'She said she had something for her and told her to close her eyes. She then produced the kitchen knife from her bag and stabbed her in the chest.

'The fortunate thing about it is the plan failed because the friend stepped back and opened her eyes just before or at the moment of impact.

'The knife cut through the lapel of her school blazer and her shirt and caused a superficial puncture wound to her chest in a position above the heart.

'Stepping back, she stumbled down steps and was able to raise the alarm. The defendant also ran away and left the premises but was brought back by her parents.'

The judge, Mr Justice Fraser, adjourned the case for sentencing on a date to be set and ordered a psychiatric report and pre-sentence reports to be prepared on the defendant.

He told her: 'You are going to have to come back to be sentenced in a number of weeks. There are certain reports I need and one of them is a psychiatric report.'

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WATCH: Ghost hunters spooked by 'dark spirit that made creepy doll MOVE'

express.co.uk

express_logo_poppy

GHOST hunters claim to have caught on camera the moment a 'dark spirit' tried to intimidate them into not returning to one of the UK's most haunted houses - by moving a creepy DOLL.

PUBLISHED: 11:44, Wed, Oct 19, 2016 | UPDATED: 11:44, Wed, Oct 19, 2016

Lee Roberts and Paul Stevenson were doing a practice live broadcast from the notorious poltergeist hotspot ahead of their scheduled Halloween visit.

However while filming themselves creep around the infamous 30 East Drive in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, they claim a doll in one of the bedrooms was used by a poltergeist or demonic force to scare them.

The terrifying footage shows porcelain doll 'Victoria' in her box with the lid on when they first go in the bedroom.

However when the return moments later the doll has moved and the lid is completely off and has been bent out of shape, leaving the pair then checking the house for an intruder in panic.

The house was the site of one of Britain's most notorious alleged hauntings when the Pritchard family were subjected to years of torment by the so-called 'Black Monk of Pontefract'.

Mr Roberts, 39, believes the **Black Monk** is a 'dark spirit', possibly 'demonic', who used Victoria to scare the ghost hunting duo into not returning on Halloween.

Mr Roberts, from Sutton in Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, said: "It was very unexpected. You can go and try and get something on camera and never get anything.



GETTY

"We were only testing the signal really but things just started to happen so we kept rolling.

"We're going back on the 50th anniversary of when things first started happening to the Pritchard family in that house. So even if nothing happens it's still nice to mark this.

"We started hearing a few knocks and bangs quite quickly but I usually put those down to it being an old house, from a scientific point of view.

"But we had not heard anything like this before and next door was away so there was no noise coming from there.

"The doll Victoria was apparently found in the attic of the house but no one knows where she came from or who she belonged to.

"The box actually has a warning on it saying that if you wish to look at Victoria you should not take her out of the box and always cover her back up.

"I'm sure it's there for effect but it's quite unsettling to read that in the dark as your mind starts playing tricks on you."



GETTY

The footage, caught on September 20, shows the duo come into the bedroom and film the position that Victoria is lay in, with the lid to the box covering her face.



GETTY

After leaving the room, Mr Roberts claims that they both saw the shape of a figure move across the hallway with 'wavy black hair', just like the doll, followed by a loud bang so had gone back to the room to investigate.

Mr Roberts, who runs Haunted Events UK with Mr Stevenson, said: "When we returned to the doll and put the light back on her she had moved - just after we had heard some bangs in the house.

"You can clearly see the reaction on camera. I was speechless. Paul was adamant someone was playing tricks on us and wouldn't even come into the room he was so scared."

The footage shows Mr Stevenson then claim he heard someone call out 'Lee' so the duo panic and begin rushing downstairs in fear to check the doors are locked.



GETTY

Mr Roberts said: "We didn't know what was real and what wasn't. If someone had been in there toying with us then that's even scarier than a ghost haunting us.

"It was a really, really frightening 90 minutes. As we left the door swung open but it wouldn't do it again when we tried. It looked like a yank.

"I definitely think it was some presence doing it. We were just about to leave so I think it was something there warning us to say 'don't come back'.

"I should not be scared of going back at Halloween as that's my job, this is what I do. However on the flip side I am quite apprehensive about what could happen.

"Should we really be messing around with this? Obviously something doesn't want us there. The stuff that happened with the doll really makes me nervous.

"Lots of people refer to him as the Black Monk but looking at the history of the location, I don't think he was a monk.

"I believe there is a dark figure there and people associate that with a monk. But there's definitely a dark presence, but I don't know if he was ever living - it could be a demonic presence.

"The doll is not actually the issue, it's what is controlling the doll and making it move, that's the scary part.

"Why is this thing in 30 East Drive? Why does it stay there? We need an open mind to find out what is in there and figure out if it is real or if something needs help to be let out."



GETTY



GETTY

The duo's footage includes them running in fear down the same set of stairs where 14-year-old Diane Pritchard was allegedly dragged by the hair by the supposed Black Monk.

Mr Stevenson, 47, said: "The house frustrates you, it annoys you at times, but there's something dark there and at times it scares the sh*t out of me.

"The beauty of it is that it's not a castle, it's not a 14th Century coaching inn, it's a former council house, in the middle of an estate - unassuming but with a dark secret."

The haunting at 30 East Drive was the subject of the 2012 horror movie When The Lights Went Out and was investigated for the Halloween special of Most Haunted Live in 2015.

The house remains open for bookings - though Ouija boards and exorcisms are banned on the property.

Mr Roberts and Mr Stevenson plan to return for Halloween and film themselves in the house for a Haunted Events UK live stream on social media.

Tuesday, 8th November 2016

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Haunted Houses Are About More Than Just Ghosts

nytimes.com

The New York Times By TIYA MILESOCT. 27, 2016

GHOSTLAND
An American History in Haunted Places
By Colin Dickey
320 pp. Viking. $27.

Whether or not ghosts are real is beside the point, Colin Dickey tells us in the first lines of “Ghostland.” Rather, what compels him in this appealing book is the meaning of haunted places in contemporary American culture. “How do we deal with stories about the dead and their ghosts?” Dickey asks. “How do we inhabit and move through spaces that we have deemed haunted?”

To answer those questions, Dickey, a writer who has produced eerie studies of historical and anatomical oddities, turns his ever curious eye to the widespread phenomenon of hauntings — to the lure of ghostly places for visitors and the impact of these places on local communities. The spectral map Dickey creates is as broad and packed as his book’s title implies. He visits haunted houses (the most prevalent of spooky places, he explains with a fascinating aside about memory palaces), haunted businesses, prisons, asylums and cemeteries across the contiguous United States — from New England, New York, the South and Midwest to the Rocky Mountains, Southwest and Pacific Coast. As he interweaves a series of perceptive insights on architecture and human psychology, technology and ghost hunts, not to mention haunting as social control, Dickey shows how haunted places reveal what troubled us before and what troubles us now.

Dickey concludes that ghost stories attached to particular places often contain social anxieties and unsettled issues from the past. Although these ghost stories recall difficult realities — like the wrongful execution of minorities in the case of the Salem “witches,” the physical and emotional abuses of slavery, resistance to women’s independence, and tensions between the rich and the poor — they fail to achieve a public reckoning with historical injustice. Ghosts, Dickey asserts, are a “convenient metaphor for a whole host of problems not connected to the supernatural,” and talking about them “becomes a means to process or make sense of experiences that can otherwise seem overwhelming or mystifying.”

“Ghostland” amounts to a lively assemblage and smart analysis of dozens of haunting stories, some better known than others. In each chapter, Dickey spins riveting tales and then carefully unwinds these narratives, exposing the materials and motivations of their construction. At the House of the Seven Gables in Salem, Mass., made famous by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Dickey learns that the haunted hidden staircase that has long enthralled tourists was never even seen by Hawthorne; it was added by restorers more than half a century later. At the Mustang Ranch, a brothel near Reno, Nev., which Dickey describes as the site with the “strongest evidence of the paranormal” of all the places he visited, he nevertheless hypothesizes that the propensity for female employees to witness ghosts stems from the extreme stress of their work lives.

The most fascinating moments in “Ghostland” are Dickey’s etymological musings (on terms like “haunt,” “cemetery,” “ruin porn” and “ghost town”) and his many turns down unusual paths of American history. His discussion of the links between 19th-century Spiritualism, the early feminist movement and contemporary New Age beliefs; his account of the red dwarf who is said to have haunted Detroit since the city’s founding, in 1701; and his recognition that ghost stories can aid the

work of historic preservation: All of these are absorbing. While many of the ghost stories he recounts can be found in academic treatments as well as lighthearted local guides, with “Ghostland,” Dickey achieves a capacious geographical synthesis that is both intellectually intriguing and politically instructive.

Tiya Miles’s most recent books are “Tales From the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery From the Civil War Era” and “The Cherokee Rose: A Novel of Gardens and Ghosts.”

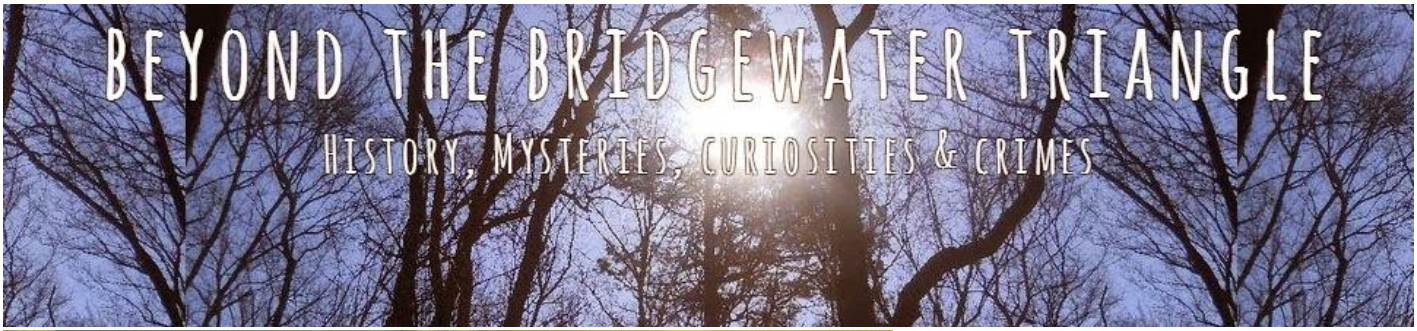
A version of this review appears in print on October 30, 2016, on page BR12 of the Sunday Book Review with the headline: Spooky . Today's Paper|Subscribe

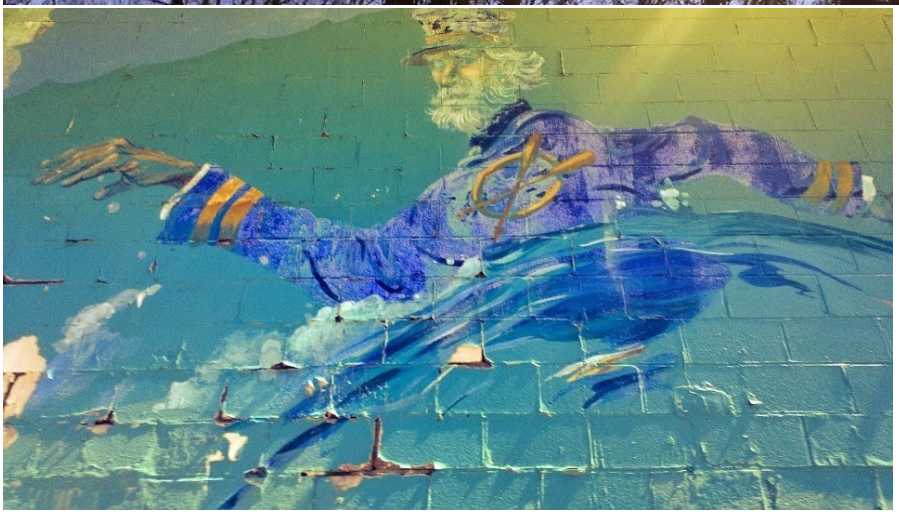
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Haunted Hull: Three True Ghost Stories To Chill You To The Bone

thebridgewatertriangle.com





This mural depicts the esteemed Captain Joshua James, keeper of the lifesavers station and witness to a spectral horse and buggy.

The oldest towns in the Bridgewater Triangle area seem to harbor the biggest mysteries. And Hull, a seaside town settled just one year after the arrival of the Mayflower, is certainly no exception. With over 75 shipwrecks off its rocky coast, legends of monstrous sea serpents lurking in its waters, mysterious pea soup fogs that roll in and out in a matter of seconds...Hull is the perfect backdrop for tales of the macabre. These chilling tales are all true and shockingly, were well documented in the highly reputable *Boston Globe.*

The Silent Black Bay Horse And Empty Carriage

“One night the captain says the buggy rolled past him on the road leading to Stony Beach.Having heard much about the specter buggy, he hurried after it, when to his surprise, instead of turning to the right in the direction of Nantasket, or to the the left toward Battery heights, where it had usually been encountered. it made straight for the railroad track which runs along the top of the beach, disappearing on the rails between sea wall and the little station.” The Boston Globe on Captain Joshua James’ sighting of a spectral horse and carriage.

The first appearance of a phantom horse and carriage came two weeks too late for Halloween in November of 1896. but the sightings of this mysterious buggy would continue for years. Residents were mystified by first reports of credible witnesses who claimed to have seen a “phantom buggy”...

a horse and carriage that would silently stroll the darkened streets just past midnight. The horse was described to be a healthy-looking large black Bay horse whose silent hooves "glided noiselessly through the village streets, with no apparent destination." The Boston Globe called the phantom buggy the "Up-to-date imitator" of the Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow, reporting:

"People of Hull Village are mystified over the appearance of a substantially-built buggy drawn by a well-fed dark bay horse, which almost every night enters the town and glides noiselessly through the village streets, with no apparent destination, and then as quietly departs.

At times it is seen rolling over the smoothly graded main street in the direction of Pemberton landing, to which the boats have ceased run and where everything is closed, only immediately to return and leave the town. At other times the lifesaving patrol has seen it standing near the dead house in one of the most isolated parts of the town, but here, as elsewhere, although the horse in usually slowly driven, no one has been able to get a glimpse of the occupant of the vehicle. Even, when citizens have come full upon it, only dense blackness has been under its low sheltering covering and when an attempt is made by the more brave pedestrians to satisfy their curiously, the horse is startled into a brisk trot."

Six years later, The Boston Globe would report again about the Phantom Black Horse and Carriage in March of 1902, though no specific year is attached to the following account recalled by The Globe of Captain Joshua James' infamous phantom buggy sighting. Captain Joshua James was the Keeper of the Lifesaving Station, and a highly-respected citizen of significant historical importance to the town of Hull, for it was under his command that over 545 lives were saved from drowning under his 75 years of service.

"This town, judging from a series of occult, or at least very mysterious events transpiring there from time to time within the past few years, is a good field for psychical research.

First it had its mysterious buggy, a vehicle that repeatedly rolled through the village streets at midnight without sound of wheels or clatter of hoofs and without any visible occupant.

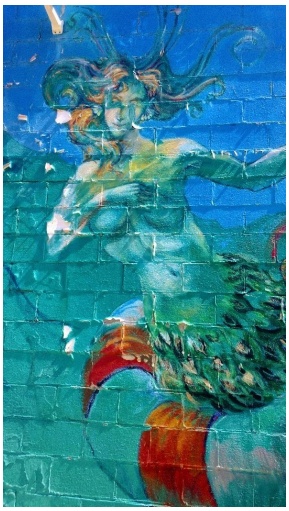
This uncanny vehicle was seen by no less a personage than Capt. Joshua James, who is known not to have a particle of superstition in his makeup.

One night the captain says the buggy rolled past him on the road leading to Stony Beach.Having heard much about the specter buggy, he hurried after it, when to his surprise, instead of turning to the right in the direction of Nantasket, or to the the left toward Battery heights, where it had usually been encountered. It made straight for the railroad track which runs along the top of the beach, disappearing on the rails between sea wall and the little station.

The captain was hard upon it, but when he reached the station it was nowhere to be seen up or down the track. It seemed to have dissipated into the air or been submerged in the breakers below."

The Muffled Lady

"The figure stopped, and seemed to wait for him to catch up with it, and then in silence, walked along by his side. He peered into the face as best he could, but saw only two glistening eyeballs." The Boston Globe. January, 1898.



In the winter of 1898, three separate Lifesavers--Patrolman Number Five, Six, and Two-- were witness to a mysterious woman who silently roamed the most deserted parts of town after midnight. The mysterious woman seemed interested in the men, for she would follow them, her footsteps matching those of the Lifesavers. If they slowed down, she slowed down, if they stopped, she stopped. One lifesaver, upon hearing the footsteps behind him, went to draw his revolver, believing he was about to be robbed, only to see the woman.

The Boston Globe covered the story of the muffled woman on January 5, 1898, with the headline: “More Mystery. Hull Has Its Annual Uncanny Visitor.Figure in Female Attire in Lonely Part of Village.Several Life Savers Say They Have Met Her.Silent and Closely Muffled She Glides Along.None Can Prevail Upon Her To Answer Questions.” The story began: “Hull has become noted for its episodes of mystery. Scarcely a winter has passed without some excitement in the line of ghostology. Last year it was a mysterious buggy on the quiet village streets at the midnight hour, and although the hoofbeats of the specter horse have ceased to be heard, the mystery has never been satisfactorily solved.

This season having so far advanced the citizens had concluded that nothing would occur to disturb the dull monotonous routine. But a new mystery has developed. This time it comes in the form of a strange woman or possibly a man disguised in female attire, that has been seen, not on the well lighted streets of the village, but in one of the most isolated parts of the town, where nobody lives or visits except the lifesavers as they patrol the shore lying between Stony Beach and Pemberton every night.

What a female unattended, with her face closely muffled, can be doing in that lonely place after dark, night after night, and suddenly appearing before the life-savers, but making no reply to their challenges, constitutes the mystery. Few women, or men either, for that matter, would have courage enough to visit the deserted place at night, even under compulsion….Last Thursday night, patrolman No. 6 when a tall form clad in women's apparel appeared to him he instinctively to clutch his revolver. He had just received his monthly pay, which be had on his person and his first thought was that he was about the be wayland land robbed.

The figure stopped, and seemed to wait for him to catch up with it, and then in silence, walked along by his side. He peered into the face as best he could, but saw only two glistening eyeballs”.

.The Robed Lady In White



Village Cemetery, Hull. How this jacket became draped over this stone is a mystery.
This stone is just feet away from
the very spot the robed lady in white appeared to young Hull resident, Stillman Mitchell in 1902.

"The apparition which had started to descend the embankment drew back a step, but was silent. I was then convinced that had it been a member of the club or anyone that knew me he would have revealed his identity, but this thing in white, with one hand outstretched, stood like a statue with an electrical light right overhead streaming down upon it."

On March 3, 1902, a mysterious woman would appear to 22-year old Spring Street resident Stillman Mitchell's disbelieving eyes as he passed by the large tomb at the edge of Village Cemetery. Mitchell had just left a friend's nearby house when young man witnessed a white-robed figure of a woman with her hand outstretched toward him. Mitchell stopped and watched the ghastly figure for over twenty minutes. Mitchell described the woman to as appearing under a "glistening robe of white."

Stillman Mitchell made a signed affidavit to The Boston Globe that his story was legitimate.The following comes that affidavit, which the Boston Globe published on March 4, 1902.

"The village cemetery lies less than a minute's walk from Miss Vining's. In order to get along as far as possible before the lights went out I walked quite rapidly. But I had scarcely reached the graveyard when a deep and sepulchral groan fell upon my ear. It startled me for an instant, but quickly recovering myself I kept on my way homeward.

Those awful and piteous moans continued, however, and just as I arrived opposite the new tomb a white-shrouded figure rose as if from one of the graves and advanced toward me. At this moment, when some people, perhaps, would have been terrified, I felt as fearless as if it were broad daylight. This might have been because it instantly struck me that some of the members of the club who had left for home early in the evening were playing a trick on me.

"I stopped and placed my hand on my hip as if to draw a revolver, at the time saying: What are you trying to do? You had better look out. It's a dangerous thing to do, whoever you are, as some folks have been shot while playing such tricks.

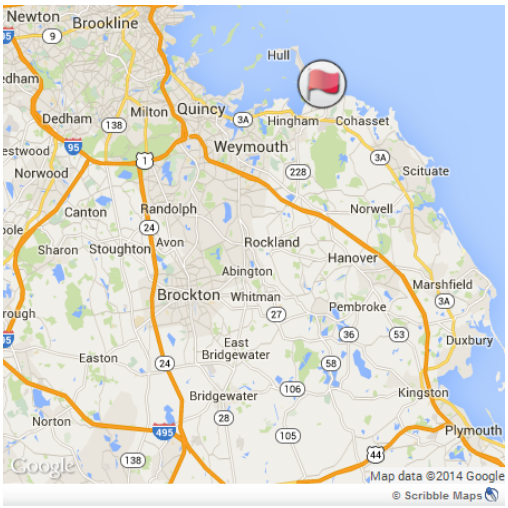
"The apparition which had started to descend the embankment drew back a step, but was silent. I was then convinced that had it been a member of the club or anyone that knew me he would have

revealed his identity, but this thing in white, with one hand outstretched, stood like a statue with an electrical light right overhead streaming down upon it."

I went on until I reached Miss Vining's residence about half way to the life saving station, when it occurred to me that my story would not be credited. Therefore I turned about determined to find out what was under that glistening robe of white if it still remained. When I reached the tomb I found the statue in white was still occupying the same place I had last seen it. One hand was on the fence and the other stretched toward me. I boldly stepped off the sidewalk and approached it.

I had reached the middle of the street when it began to disappear. It did not move from the spot on which it stood, neither to the right nor left, but seemed to dissolve until it entirely vanished.

I do not pretend to say it was a ghost," continued Mr. Mitchell, "I do not know what it was. But I have faithfully described my strange adventure at the cemetery in every detail."



Map of Hull's location.

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Haunted Tugboat Lurks in Milwaukee Harbor

cultofweird.com

Cult of Weird

Museum of Oddities and Obscurities - www.cultofweird.com

Cult of Weird

By Charlie Hintz on May 7, 2015

6 men lost their lives when the haunted tugboat *Wisconsin* sank in 1941. Since its restoration, strange phenomena have convince some that those men never left it.



Haunted Wisconsin tugboat in Milwaukee

Haunted Wisconsin tugboat in Milwaukee. Photo via Tugboat Wisconsin.

I recently heard about the haunted tugboat in Milwaukee from a friend who is a self-professed Great Lakes boat nerd. When he's not filling me in on the latest weird news from Lake Michigan, he's usually busy stalking freshwater freighters on radar and webcam, and researching the complete history of every ship.

About a year ago he made an impromptu trip to snap some photos of the *SS Alpena* during a brief layover in the Milwaukee harbor. It was there that a pair of friendly security guards confessed their unease about the small, otherwise unremarkable tugboat moored nearby.

October 23rd, 1941. A 552-foot steamer called the *B.F. Jones* had run aground. The tug, then named the *America*, was dispatched to help with 6 crew members. Built in 1897, the boat was already 44 years old. I haven't been able to dig up any details on the circumstances, but age may have had a hand in the events that followed.

Somewhere in the Detroit River, en route to the stalled steamer, tragedy struck. The *America* went down with all hands.

The tugboat was eventually raised and repaired. It was renamed the *Midway* in 1982, and then finally became the *Wisconsin* in 1983.

Milwaukee's Haunted Tugboat

Today, the 118-year-old *Wisconsin* is still in operation. It seems that anyone who spends some time with her, though, will begin to agree that the crewmen that went down with her in 1941 may have never left.

Rumor has it there are men who refuse to step foot on the boat. The engine has been known to cut out unexpectedly, and the guards my friend spoke to that day witness flickering lights and strange sounds on a regular basis.

Maybe some things are better left to the depths.

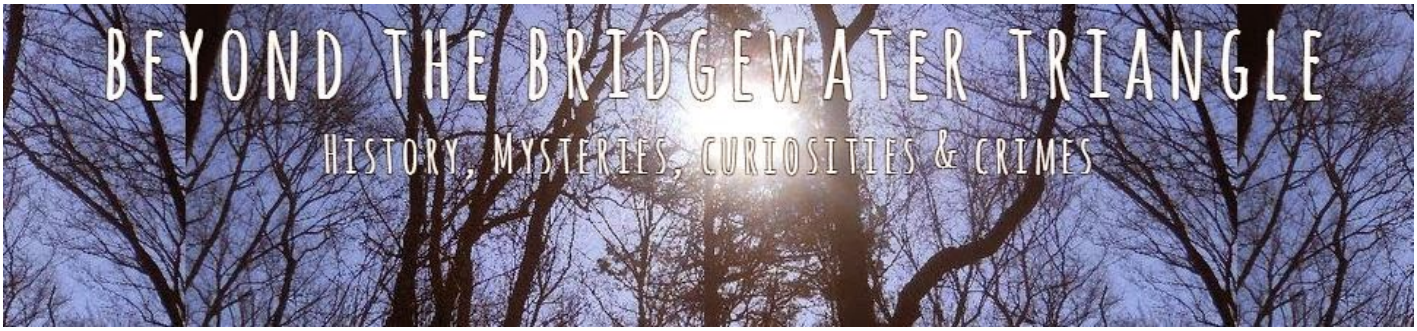
Do you have any information on the haunted tugboat or other strange things from Milwaukee or Lake Michigan? Tell me about it in the comments below or email me.

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The Haunting of Brockton Hospital

thebridgewatertriangle.com



I found this little gem of a ghost story last spring while scouring local newspaper archives for Bridgewater Triangle area ghost stories. This one--the account of a ghost known as the "Shadowy Screecher of Brockton City Hospital"--had police, doctors, nurses, patients and watchmen on high alert on Halloween night of 1926. But to everyone's disappointment, the ghost pulled a no show. The following article was published in The Boston Globe on November 1, 1926.

Hospital Ghost Spurns Halloween
Fails to Perform for Brockton Watchers
Old Tunnel Beneath the Building May Solve Mystery

BROCKTON, Oct 31--Halloween, the time of ghosts and goblins, queer noises and gibberings, passed without any manifestation from the "Shadowy Screecher" of Brockton City Hospital.

For a week "The Ghost" has made nightly visits to the hospital, and in the wee-hours of the morning patients, nurses and even members of Brockton police force were startled, and in some cases, frightened to hear lhigh-pitched, long drawn out screams. The screams sounded first near Ward A in the old part of the building and then in other sections, ending in a long drawn-out derisive wall from the distance.

But "The Ghost" has not been located. Apparently it is temperamental, for on the one night in the year, a night given over to fantastic and mystical apparitions, when "The Ghost" had a real right to perform, he did not show up from midnight to daylight. For the first time in a week since last Sunday, the hospital was free from disturbance of the nocturnal visitor,


HOSPITAL'S GHOST SPURNS HALLOWEEN

Fails to Perform for Brockton Watchers

Old Tunnels Beneath Buildings May Solve Mystery

Special Dispatch to the Globe

BROCKTON, Oct 31—Halloween, the time of ghosts and goblins, queer noises and gibberings, passed without

Patients in A and Wales wards slept comfortably, but nurses, house officers and others kept alert for hours.

Shortly after 5 o'clock, when the nurses entered the wards to prepare the patients for the day, the patients seemed to be more disturbed by the absence of the ghost then when he had made his "call."

Last February, the noises were first heard for about three nights and repeated again a week ago

Wednesday. During the height of the heavy rainstorm last Sunday night the patients and members of the night staff were startled by loud noises and a wailing high-pitched tone. The this tone was not too high for a man's voice, however.

For several nights, a detail of police have guarded the hospital and conducted an investigation of the matter, but the officers did not "lay the ghost."

One patient declared that from the window of his room he saw the ghost run away after a particularly loud screech was heard. Beneath the building there are several old tunnels that connect the various department buildings and it is possible for someone to enter them if he were familiar with the institution. Wile some of the screaming and wailing seems to come from beneath the building, most of it is from outside however. Various suspects have been checked up and eliminated from the investigation.

Last night the police detail was not seen in the hospital, but a group of men and women kept vigil in Ward A. Two ex-patients, a house physician, four women nurses and a Boston reporter awaited "the ghost." At 3 a.m. the ex-patients and the physicians left for bed, but the reporter's vigil continued all through the early morning.

Constantly, the nurses assured him he was about to see the ghost, at that the ghost always appeared at just a certain time. At 5:30 o'clock the watchful waiting ended with no ghost.

Like this ghost story? Want another? Click here.

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This girl got her head stuck inside a pumpkin, because Halloween

metro.co.uk

Miranda Larbi for Metro.co.ukFriday 28 Oct 2016 3:34 pm



This girl got her head stuck inside a pumpkin, because Halloween

(Picture: Kristy Packer Ralphs/Youtube

Turning Halloween into an all-singing all-dancing party ritual is still a relatively new thing here in the UK, which is why our pumpkins are crap and small.

But not in America, AKA the home of Halloween.

Across the pond, pumpkin carving is a sacred thing – and with good reason. Their gourds are absolutely huge, and the carving potential is immense.

Which might go someway to explaining how and why a teen got her whole head stuck inside one, becoming a real life Jack ‘o’ Lantern.



(Picture: Kristy Packer Ralphs/Youtube)



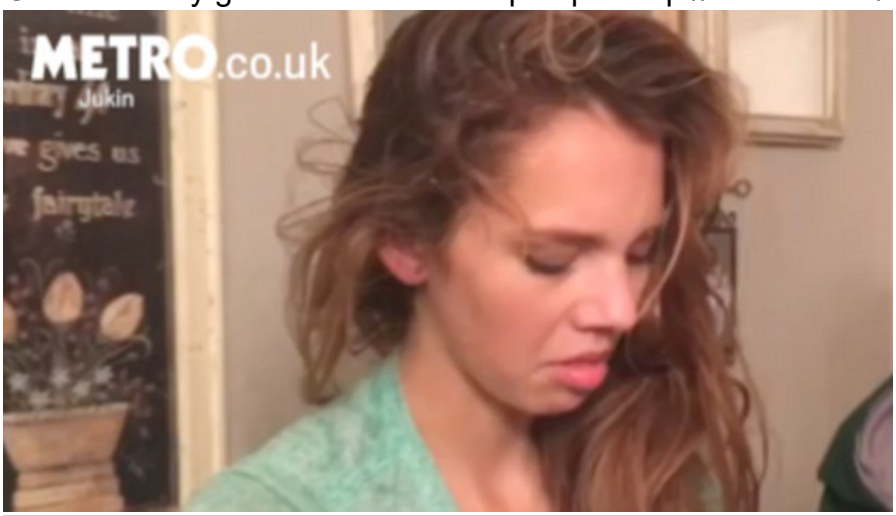
Kristy Packer Ralphs’ family was sitting around the dining table carving their vegetables when her daughter Rachel decided to have a peek inside.

But she instantly regretted her decision when it became clear that she couldn’t get it back out – thanks in part to her pony tail getting stuck.

While Rachel screams inside the pumpkin, her younger brother sings a delightful ditty about carving up pumpkins.

And Kristy helps by filming the whole gourd escapade – which has now been viewed over 200,000 times on YouTube.

Girl eventually gets her head out of pumpkinhttp://metro.co.uk/video/1348483



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Helicopter struck by suspected drunk driver near Gallup

kob.com

Kenneth Mahan
October 23, 2016 10:39 PM

McKinley County Sheriff's Deputies say an alleged drunk driver ran through barricades to strike a fire truck and medical helicopter.

Frank Hernandez was at the scene and witnessed the crash. Hernandez works for Speedway Towing in Gallup. He was at the site of a crash to tow away a vehicle that had rolled over, the wreck that the medical helicopter was responding to.

"Then I noticed after we got the vehicle picked up, this black Jeep flew past us," said Frank Hernandez. "I was thinking what the heck is this guy doing? Because they had people out there trying to stop traffic, already he almost hit two ladies."



KOB viewer



Frank Hernandez

Hernandez says the Jeep plowed through the barrier around the medical helicopter before hitting the fire truck and then the helicopter.

The suspected driver has been identified as 26-year-old Glenn Livingston of Gallup.

"Our medical team did an outstanding job. The patient was extremely critical, they maintained composure, they were professional and the stabilized this patient despite the incident that occurred on the scene," said Regional Director Julia Azua.

The patient made it safely to the hospital due to the medical crew's efforts.

Hernandez says the accident wasn't even a surprise.

"You've got to be pretty drunk. I've seen them where they've taken vehicles off the road and they don't know they did that, or not," said Hernandez.

Hernandez says he estimates about 95% of the cars in his lot were destroyed due to drunk drivers.

Livingston was arrested and is facing charges that include aggravated DWI and open container.

Credits

Kenneth Mahan

Updated: October 23, 2016 10:39 PM
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Boyfriend leaves lover red faced with airport prank - and staff join in

11:49, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 11:49, 1 Nov 2016 By Debbie Jackson

mirror.co.uk



Boyfriend prints out girlfriend's boarding pass - but it's a bit bigger than usual

A 'helpful' boyfriend managed to turn his girlfriend's face bright red with a delightful check-in desk prank at Glasgow Airport.

Ryan Cawley, 24, had appeared to be the perfect partner last week when he offered to print the boarding passes for his and his girlfriend's mini-break to Europe.

The pair, from East Kilbride, were heading to Prague and then Berlin for a holiday, travelling with the budget airline Jet2.

On arrival at the airport, Caitlin Kerr, 24, asked Ryan for the travel documents, triggering the hilarious prank, reports the Daily Record.



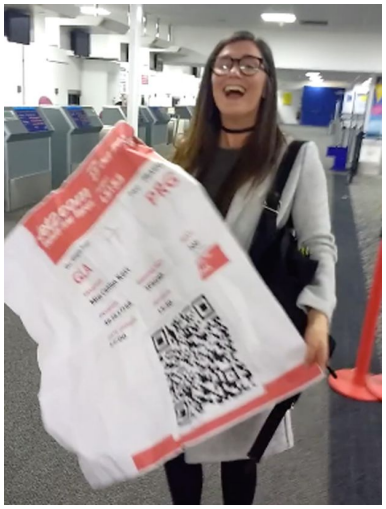
Daily Record

Caitlin realises something is amiss as she unfolds the pile of paper

Ryan said: "I thought it would be a great laugh, so I printed the pass off as big as I could and hid it from Caitlin until we got there.

"Then I handed it to her, casually saying 'your boarding pass is in this pile of paper somewhere."

The 'pile of paper' was in fact the entire pass, folded over and over.



Daily Record

Ryan said he "thought it would be a great laugh"
Luckily, the Jet2 ground crew saw the funny side

Ryan said, 'When she kept unfolding the paper, she got more and more embarrassed with each fold.

"It was hilarious."

And in case you're worried about the airline accepting such a thing - the Jet2 staff joined in with the joke.

The pass was indeed acceptable and the ground crew were keen to share the fun.



Daily Record

Ryan explained, "The airport and Jet2 staff were taking pictures with us before sending up through to security."

DailyMirror

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Computer Scientists Doubt Facebook's Trending Algorithm Can Stop Fake News

BuzzFeed Staff

buzzfeed.com

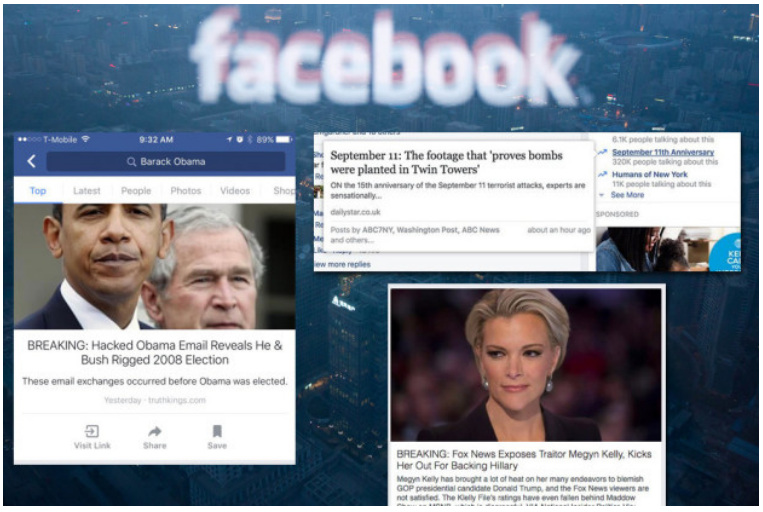
Here's Why Facebook's Trending Algorithm Keeps Promoting Fake News

The Trending product has repeatedly promoted false news, and experts say it may get worse as the company scales Trending internationally.



Craig Silverman

Craig Silverman
BuzzFeed Founding Editor, Canada



Facebook has placed a high-stakes — and, experts say, unwise — bet that an algorithm can play the lead role in stanching the flood of misinformation the powerful social network promotes to its users.

The social network where 44% of Americans go to get news has in recent weeks promoted in its Trending box everything from the satirical claim that Siri would jump out of iPhones to the lunatic theory that Presidents Bush and Obama conspired to rig the 2008 election. As Facebook prepares to roll out the Trending feature to even more of its 1.7 billion users, computer scientists are warning that its current algorithm-driven approach with less editorial oversight may be no match for viral lies.

"Automatic (computational) fact-checking, detection of misinformation, and discrimination of true and fake news stories based on content [alone] are all extremely hard problems," said Fil Menczer, a computer scientist at Indiana University who is leading a project to automatically identify social media memes and viral misinformation. "We are very far from solving them."



Fil Menczer

Three top researchers who have spent years building systems to identify rumors and misinformation on social networks, and to flag and debunk them, told BuzzFeed News that Facebook made an already big challenge even more difficult when it fired its team of editors for Trending.

Kalina Bontcheva leads the EU-funded PHEME project working to compute the veracity of social media content. She said reducing the amount of human oversight for Trending heightens the likelihood of failures, and of the algorithm being fooled by people trying to game it.

"I think people are always going to try and outsmart these algorithms — we've seen this with search engine optimization," she said. "I'm sure that once in a while there is going to be a very high-profile failure."

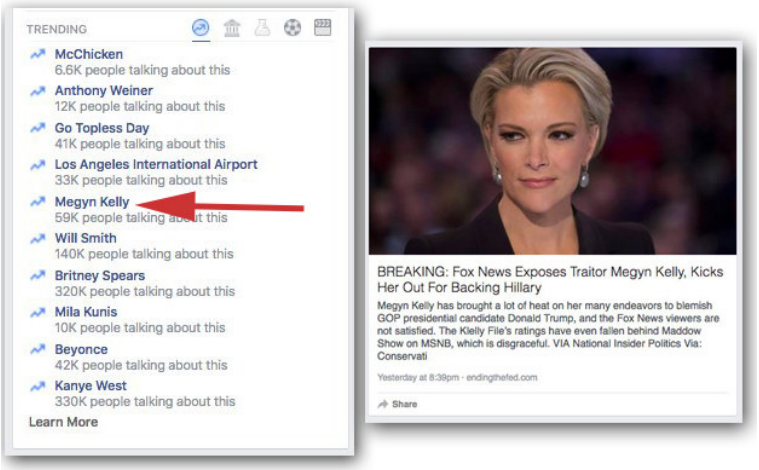
Less human oversight means more reliance on the algorithm, which creates a new set of concerns, according to Kate Starbird, an assistant professor at the University of Washington who has been using machine learning and other technology to evaluate the accuracy of rumors and information during events such as the Boston bombings.

"[Facebook is] making an assumption that we're more comfortable with a machine being biased than with a human being biased, because people don't understand machines as well," she said.

Taking Trending global

Facebook's abrupt doubling down on an algorithm to identify trending discussions and related news stories has its roots in the company's reaction to a political controversy. In May, *Gizmodo* reported that the dedicated human editors who helped select topics and news stories for the Trending box said some of their colleagues "routinely suppressed" news of interest to a conservative audience. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg convened an apologetic meeting with conservative media leaders. Three months later, the company fired the editors and let an algorithm take a bigger role with reduced human oversight.

Two days after dismissing the editors, a fake news story about Megyn Kelly being fired by Fox News made the Trending list. Next, a 9/11 conspiracy theory trended. At least five fake stories were promoted by Facebook's Trending algorithm during a recent three-week period analyzed by the *Washington Post*. After that, the 2008 conspiracy post trended.



Facebook now has a "review team" working on Trending, but their new guidelines require them to exercise less editorial oversight than the previous team. A Facebook spokesperson told BuzzFeed news theirs is more of a quality assurance role than an editorial one. Reviewers are, however, required to check whether the headline of an article being promoted within a trend is clickbait or a hoax or contains "demonstrably false information." Yet hoaxes and fake news continue to fool the algorithm and the reviewers.

Facebook executives have acknowledged that its current Trending algorithm and product is not as good as it needs to be. But the company has also made it clear that it intends to launch Trending internationally in other languages. By scaling internationally, Facebook is creating a situation whereby future Trending failures will potentially occur at a scale unheard of in the history of human communication. Fake stories and other dubious content could reach far more people faster than ever before.

For Trending to become a reliable, global product, it will need to account for the biases, bad actors, and other challenges that are endemic to Facebook and the news media. Put another way, in order to succeed, the Trending algorithm needs to be better than the very platform that spawned it. That's because fake news is already polluting the platform's News Feed organically. A recent BuzzFeed News analysis of giant hyperpartisan Facebook pages found that 38% of posts on conservative pages and 19% of posts on liberal pages featured false or misleading content.

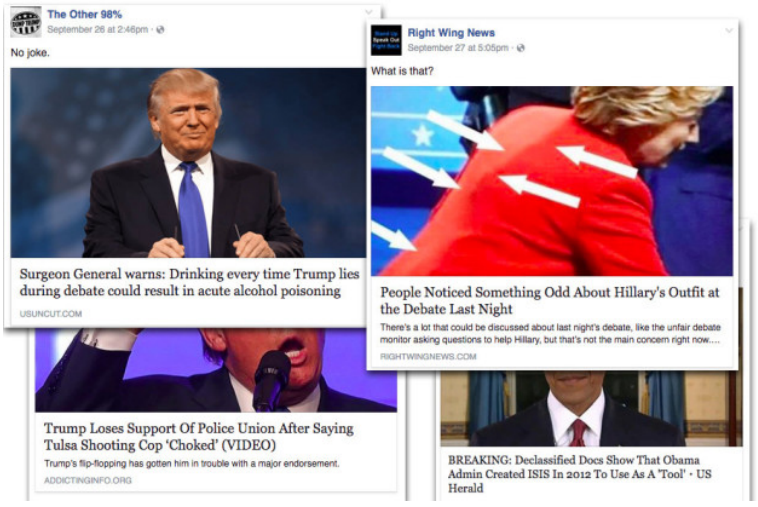
Facebook's challenge with fake news has its roots, of course, in the platform's users — us. Humans embrace narratives that fit their biases and preconceptions, making them more likely to click on and share those stories. Mark Zuckerberg acknowledged this in a Facebook post marking the 10th anniversary of News Feed.

"Research shows that we all have psychological bias that makes us tune out information that doesn't fit with our model of the world," he wrote.

Facebook relies primarily on what humans are doing on Facebook — likes, shares, clicks, et cetera — in order to train the Trending algorithm. The company may have ditched its editors, but we humans are still giving biased signals to the algorithm, which then mediates these biases back to an even larger group of humans. Fake news stories keep trending because people on Facebook keep reading and sharing and liking them — and the review team keeps siding with the algorithm's choices.

As far as the algorithm is concerned, a conspiracy theory about 9/11 being a controlled demolition is worth promoting because people are reading, sharing, and reacting to it with strong signals at high velocity. The platform promoted a fake Megyn Kelly story from a right-wing site because people were being told what they wanted to hear, which caused them to eagerly engage with that story.

The BuzzFeed News analysis of more than 1,000 posts from hyperpartisan Facebook pages found that false or misleading content that reinforces existing beliefs received stronger engagement than accurate, factual content. The internet and Facebook are increasingly awash in fake or deeply misleading news because it generates significant traffic and social engagement.



"We're just beginning to understand the impact of socially and algorithmically curated news on human discourse, and we're just beginning to untie all of that with filter bubbles and conspiracy theories," Starbird said. "We've got these society-level problems and Facebook is in the center of it."

This reality is at odds with Facebook's vision of a network where people connect and share important information about themselves and the world around them. Facebook has an optimistic view that in aggregate people will find and share truth, but the data increasingly says the exact opposite is happening on a massive scale.

"You have a problem with people of my parents' generation who … are overwhelmed with information that may or may not be true and they can't tell the difference," Starbird said. "And more and more that's all of us."

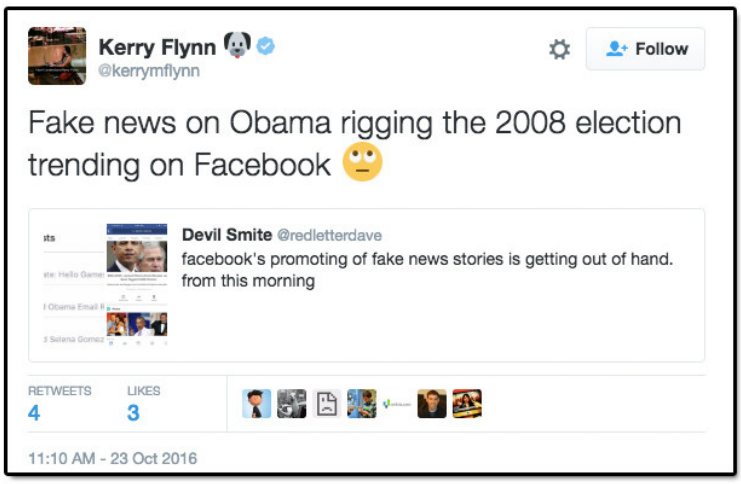
The fact that Facebook's own Trending algorithm keeps promoting fake news is the strongest piece of evidence that this kind of content overperforms on Facebook. A reliable Trending algorithm would have to find a way to account for that in order to keep dubious content out of the review team's queue.

How to train your algorithm

In order for an algorithm to spot a valid trending topic, and to discard false or otherwise invalid ones, it must be trained. That means feeding it a constant stream of data and telling it how to interpret it. This is called machine learning. Its application to the world of news and social media discussion — and in particular to the accuracy of news or circulating rumors and content — is relatively new.

Algorithms are trained using past data. This past data helps train the machine on what to look for in the future. One inevitable weakness is that an algorithm cannot predict what every new rumor, hoax, news story, or topic will look like.

“If the current hoax is very similar to a previous hoax, I’m sure [an algorithm] can pick it up,” Bontcheva said. “But if it’s something quite different from what they’ve seen before, then that becomes a difficult thing to do.”



As a way to account for unforeseen data, and the bias of users, the Trending product previously relied heavily on dedicated human editors and on the news media. In considering a potential topic, Facebook’s editors were required to check “whether the topic is national or global breaking news that is being covered by most or all of ten major media outlets.” They were also previously tasked with writing descriptions for each topic. Those descriptions had to contain facts that were “corroborated by reporting from at least three of a list of more than a thousand media outlets,” according to a statement from Facebook. The review team guidelines do not include either process.

The algorithm also used to crawl a large list of RSS feeds of reputable media outlets in order to identify breaking news events for possible inclusion as a topic. A Facebook spokesperson told BuzzFeed News that the algorithm no longer crawls RSS feeds to look for possible topics.

Facebook says it continues to work to improve the algorithm, and part of that work involves applying some of the approaches it implemented in News Feed to reduce clickbait and hoaxes.

“We’ve actually spent a lot of time on News Feed to reduce [fake stories and hoaxes’] prevalence in the ecosystem,” said Adam Mosseri, the head of News Feed, at a recent *TechCrunch* event.

Kate Starbird

Bontcheva and others said Facebook must find ways to ensure that it only promotes topics and related articles that have a diverse set of people talking about them. The algorithm needs be able to identify “that this information is interesting and seems valid to a large group of diverse people,” said Starbird. It must avoid topics and stories that are only circulating among “a small group of people that are isolated.”



It's not enough for a topic or story to be popular — the algorithm must understand who it's trending among, and whether people from different friend networks are engaging with the topic and content.

"Surely Facebook knows which users are like each other," Bontcheva said. "You could even imagine Facebook weighting some of these [topics and stories] based on a given user and how many of the comments come from people like like him or her."

This means having a trending algorithm that can recognize and account for the very same ideological filter bubbles that currently drive so much engagement on Facebook.

The Trending algorithm does factor in whether a potential topic is being discussed among large numbers of people, and whether these people are sharing more than one link about the topic, according to a Facebook spokesperson.

A suboptimal solution?

Over time, this algorithm might learn whether certain users are prone to talking about and sharing information that's only of interest to a small group of people who are just like them. The algorithm will also see which websites and news sources are producing content that doesn't move between diverse networks of users. To keep improving, it will need to collect and store this data about people and websites, and it will assign "reliability" scores based on what it learns, according to Bontcheva.

"Implicitly, algorithms will have some kind of reliability score based on past data," she said.

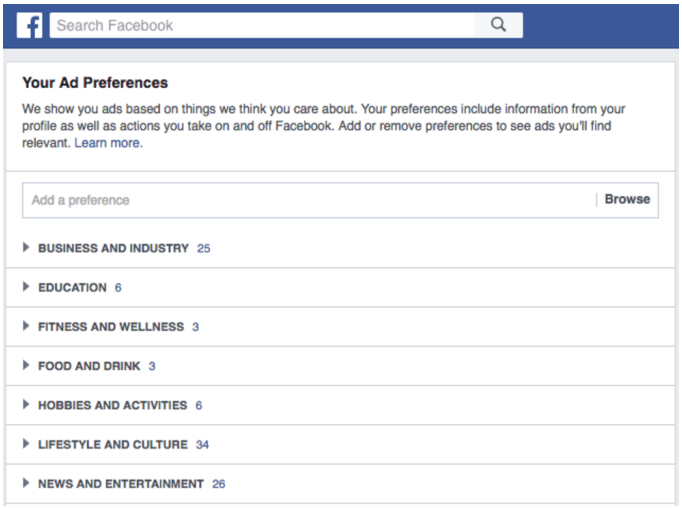
Yes, that means Facebook could in time rate the reliability and overall appeal of the information you engage with, as well as the reliability and appeal of stories from websites and other sources.

This would lead to all manner of questions: If Facebook deems you to be an unreliable source of trending topics and information, should it have to disclose that to you, just as it does your ad preferences? Should news websites be able to see how the algorithm views them at any given time?

The Facebook Ad Preferences page.

Then there's the fundamental question of whether suppression of information and sources by algorithm is preferable to suppression by humans.

"Previously the editors were accused of bias, but if [Facebook] starts building algorithms that are actually capable of removing those hoaxes altogether, isn't the algorithm going to be accused of bias and propaganda and hidden agendas?" said Bontcheva.



A spokesperson for the company said the current Trending algorithm factors in how much people have been engaging with a news source when it chooses which topics and articles to highlight. But they emphasized that this form of rating is not permanent and only pays attention to recent weeks of engagement. They will not maintain a permanent black or white list of sources for Trending. The company also said that the top news story selected for a given topic is often the same story that's at the top of the Facebook search results for that topic or term, meaning it's selected by an algorithm.

Now consider what might happen if, for example, there's a discussion about vaccines happening on a large scale. Maybe the algorithm sees that it's generating enough engagement to be trending, and maybe the top story is from an anti-vaccine website or blog. The algorithm may put that topic and story in the queue for review. Would a reviewer promote the topic with that story? Would they recognize that the anti-vaccine argument stems from "demonstrably false information," as their guidelines prescribe, and suppress the topic and story? Or would they promote the topic but select a different story?

Those decisions are the kinds that editors make, but Trending doesn't have those anymore. Given recent failures, it's impossible to predict what might happen in this scenario.

"Is a suboptimal solution good enough, and what are the consequences of that?" Starbird asks. "And are we as a society OK with that?"

Craig Silverman is the founding editor for BuzzFeed Canada and is based in Toronto.
Contact Craig Silverman at craig.silverman@buzzfeed.com.

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Hidden tunnel under Shakespeare's Shoreditch theater

ianvisits.co.uk

IanVisits

Posted onNovember 10, 2016 Ian Visits

A three-month excavation in Shoreditch, of Shakespeare's Curtain Theatre has revealed details of a stage that is much longer than originally thought with evidence of a passageway running beneath it.



Archaeologist records the remains at the curtain theatre – MOLA

MOLA archaeologists can now also confirm that the theatre was a purpose-built structure at the rear of another building on Curtain Road in Shoreditch.

MOLA experts are hoping to uncover more secrets about the relationship between the unusual shape of the stage, the production and staging and the mysterious backstage areas through further detailed analysis.

The Curtain Theatre was intentionally built as a rectangular theatre to house plays and activities. This was not a repurposed space with a stage, it was a place where people came to be immersed in entertainment. It had timber galleries with mid and upper areas for those who could afford to spend a little more, and a courtyard made from compacted gravel for those with less to spend.



Trial excvation at the site of the curtain theatre – MOLA

The Curtain Theatre is one of earliest Elizabethan playhouses where people paid money to see performances and be entertained. This is known because fragments of ceramic money boxes have been found, which would have been used to collect the entry fees from theatregoers and then been taken to an office to be smashed and the money counted.

This office was known as the 'box office', which is the origin of the term we still use today.

Glass beads and pins, which may have come from actors' costumes, were also unearthed along with drinking vessels and clay pipes, which are likely to have belonged to revelling theatregoers and actors.

For the moment, the excavated remains of the Curtain Theatre, which takes its name from Curtain Road, have been carefully covered over with a protective membrane and a special type of pH neutral sand, while construction of The Stage, a new £750m development continues.

Heather Knight, MOLA Senior Archaeologist, commented: "Finding evidence for one of the first stages that was specifically built for plays at the end of the dig was hugely exciting and significant. This exciting discovery could



16th century money pot finials – MOLA



Early 17th century clay tobacco pipes – MOLA



Architect examines remains at the site of the curtain – MOLA

transform our understanding of the evolution of Elizabethan theatres.

"It also raises questions about the function of the theatre and the types of entertainment that might have been staged here. For example, did the unusual shape and layout of the Curtain stage influence the plays such as Henry V and Romeo and Juliet that he wrote before his company moved to the Globe with a different stage? As well as drama, could the Curtain's stage space have been used for sporting spectacles?"

When the development above ground is complete, a display of the finds will sit alongside the theatre remains as part of a visitor centre.

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Historic painting looted from earthquake-hit Italian town

thelocal.it



A crucifix in the rubble of a collapsed church in Norcia. Photo: Alberto Pizzoli/AFP

The Local
7 November 2016
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While firefighters race to salvage precious artworks from the earthquake rubble, Italy's cultural heritage is at risk from both looters and bad weather.

A 17th century painting has been stolen from a church destroyed in the central Italy earthquakes, according to Italian media.

The artwork, 'Perdono di Assisi' was painted in 1631 by French artist Jean Lhomme. The painting, of historical and cultural importance, was kept in the parish church of Nottoria, a village close to Norcia, where the epicentre of one of the quakes was located.

Police are investigating the theft, but have not ruled out the hypothesis that the painting was taken in order to safeguard it against any future tremors.

Priest Marco Rufini told Rai News: "Our churches have been destroyed and they are full of artworks. This adds insult to injury."

Bad weather over the weekend has also caused worries in the towns; the mayor of Visso, Giuliano Pazzaglini, has warned that some crucial artworks are in danger.

One 15th century fresco in Visso's town hall, 'Madonna in Trono' by Paolo da Visso, survived the quake, but could be severely damaged by the rain.

Because the entire town is considered a 'red zone', recovering the fresco would be difficult, requiring a helicopter intervention which could further damage the painting by disturbing the surrounding debris.

The 'Monuments Men' or 'red helmets', the firefighters tasked with saving Italy's cultural heritage, have been hard at work in the earthquake-struck zones, which are home to many works of art, particularly in the churches.

The fire service have shared videos and images of the rescue operations on their social media accounts, which can be viewed below.

Some of the relics saved include an urn containing the remains of Saint Benedict, the patron saint of Europe, and altar pieces and paintings.

Because of the age of the artworks, salvaging them is a delicate operation, and firefighters are also racing against time due to the risk of further damage in future tremors or inclement weather.

In Norcia, the operation to save the civil tower - which is being secured with straps - continues.

Monuments men, the red helmets who save art from the ruins of the earthquake. Exceptional images from today in Norcia.

The operation at San Francesco church is concluded: the altar piece by Jacopo Siculo, 1541 is saved.

Story continues below…

Other cities around Italy have offered to host the artworks for safekeeping; a manuscript by poet Giacomo Leopardi is being kept in a Bologna museum, while the Saint Benedict urn will likely be housed in Assisi.

The Local Europe AB
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Historical Witches and Witchtrials in Scotland

personal.utulsa.edu

Witches and Witchtrials in Scotland

Compiled by Marc Carlson
It was last edited 9 June 2004

Please note, this listing is not intended to be exhaustive, but is an ongoing compilation, as this evidence comes out.

Scotland

Date	Place	#	Name	Sex	Notes and sources:
???	Scotland	1	Dunhome, Margaret	f	Burned (Source: ?)
????	Scotland	1	Barton, William	m	Executed (Source: ?)
1479	Scotland	1	Earl of Mar	m	Executed for employing witches to kill his brother, James III. (Source: Ewen, *Witch Hunting*, 42. Kiechhefer, Richard. *European witch trials*. Berkeley, 1979)
1479	Scotland, Edinburgh	12+	???	?	12 women and "several" men burned (Source: ?)
1537	Scotland	1	Lady Glamis	f	Charged with using charms on James V (Source: Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, 455).
1557 (7/17)	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Douglas, Janet	f	Burned at Castle, Hill (Source: ?)
1563-1603	*Scotland*	*17,000+?*		*?*	*Executed or Tried? (Source: ?) This number is a little high, considering the lack of source.*
1569	Scotland, St.Andrews	1	Steward, William	f	Hanged (Source: ?)
1572	Scotland	1	Bowman, Janet	f	Burned (Source: ?)
1572	Scotland, St.Andrews	1	???	?	Burned (Source: ?)
1576	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Dunlop, Bessie of Lyne	f	Burned at Castle Hill (for being a member of a coven of eight women and four men, and for receiving herbs from the Queen of the Faeries) (Source: Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, 455).
1587-1628	*Scotland*	*20?*	*?*	*?*	*Executed in the reign of King James VI and I of England. (Source: ?)*
1588 (5/28)	Scotland, Fifeshire	1	Pearson, Alison	f	Burned (for receiving herbs and potions from the Queen of Elfame) (Source: Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, 455)
1590	Scotland	1	Lady Foullis	f	Charged with using charms on Lady Balnagowen (Source: Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, 455).
1591	Scotland	1	Duncan, Gellie (Aka Gilly)	f	Hanged. The first "North Berwick Witch" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 359)
1591 (1/30)	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Fian, John	m	(aka Cunningham, John) Burned (May have been executed on January 23rd instead) "North Berwick Witch" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 196, 359).
1592 (2)	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Graham, Richard	m	Burnt. "North Berwick Witch" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 359)
1591 (7/25)	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Maclean, Dame Euphemia	f	Burned Alive at the order of King James "North Berwick Witch" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 359)
					Sister in law of the Laird of Carshoggill. The case was dismissed by the jury, but she was condemned to death by

1591	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Napier, Barbara	f	King James. She plead pregancy, and eventually set free "North Berwick Witch" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 359)
1591	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Sampson, Agnes	f	(aka Sampsoune, Agnes) "Wise Woman of Keith". Tried, Strangled, and Burnt "North Berwick Witch" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 359; Wedeck, A Treasury of Witchcraft).
1591	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Bothwell, Francis	m	**Earl of Bothwell**. Fled the Country. "North Berwick Witch" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 359; Kittredge, Witchcraft, 278)
1595(12/16)	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Balfour, Alison	f	(possibly Margaret Balfour) Confessed under torture, recanted, then burned (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1595	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Balfour, (fnu)	m	(Husband) 81 year old man pressed under 700 pound of Iron bars. (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1595	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Balfour, (fnu)	m	(Son) Legs destroyed in Spanish boots. (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1595	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Balfour, (fnu)	m	(Daughter) 7 years old, tortured with thumbscrews (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1595	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Palpa, Thomas	m	Balfour's servant. Confessed under torture, recanted, then burned (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1596	Scotland, St.Andrews	1	Paris, (fnu)	f	Hanged
1596 (11)	Scotland	1	Stewart, Christian	f	strangled and burned
1596 (10)	Scotland	1	Jollie, Alison	f	executed
1597 (2)	Scotland, Aberdeen	22	???	?	Burned (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 19)
1597 (2)	Scotland, Aberdeen	1	Wishart, "Old Janet"	f	Burned. One of 24 "Aberdeen Witches" mentioned above (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 19).
1597 (2)	Scotland, Aberdeen	1	Crocker, Isabel	f	Burned. One of 24 "Aberdeen Witches" mentioned above (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 19).
1607 (3)	Scotland	1	Grierson, Isobel	f	Burned (Sources: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 457; Wedeck, A Treasury of Witchcraft).
1608 (5/27)	Scotland, Lang Nydrie	1	Tod, Beigis	f	burned
1608	Scotland, Breehin	?	"A number of women"	f	burned
1618	Scotland	1	Barclay, Margaret	f	Trial based on the threat of a witch, resulting in the torture and deaths of four of the accused.
1621	Scotland, Inverkeithing	1	Harlow, Bessie	f	Tried
1621	Scotland, Inverkeithing	1	Hamyltoun, Christiane	f	Tried
1621	Scotland, Inverkeithing	1	Kent, Margaret	f	Tried
1621	Scotland, Inverkeithing	1	Mundie, Beatrice	f	Tried
1621	Scotland, Inverkeithing	1	Chalmers, Bessie	f	Tried
1621	Scotland, Inverkeithing	1	Chatto, Marioun	f	Tried
1622	Scotland, Glasgow	1	Wallace, Margaret	f	executed

1622	Scotland ("North")	1	Scottie, Agnes	f	Burned
1622	Scotland ("North")	1	Jones, Katherine	f	Burned
1622	Scotland ("North")	1	Reoch, Elspeth	f	Burned
1622	Scotland ("North")	1	Yullock, Agnes	f	Burned
1622	Scotland ("North")	1	Couper, Marable	f	Burned
1622	Scotland ("North")	1	Dyneis, Jonkaf	f	Burned
1623	Scotland, Perth	?	???	?	(Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 457).
1629	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Hunter, Alexander	m	Burned
1629	Scotland, East Lothian	1	Young, Isobel	f	Of Eastbarns. Convicted, Strangled and Burned (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1636(11/19)	Scotland, Kirkaldy	1	Coke, William	m	Burned (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 114).
1636(11/19)	Scotland, Kirkaldy	1	Dick, Allison	f	Burned (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 114).
1643	Scotland	1	Barker, Janet	f	burned
1643	Scotland	1	Peebles, Marion	f	burned
1643	Scotland	1	Fynnie, Agnes	f	burned
1643	Scotland	1	Lauder, Margaret	f	burned
1643	Scotland	1	Brown, Janet	f	burned
1643	Scotland	1	Brugh, John	m	burned
1643	Scotland, Orkney	1	Cumlaquoy, Marian	f	burned
1648-1650	*Scotland*	*220 +*	*???*	*?*	*In England and Scotland, on evidence of a Scottish Witch-finder*
1649	Scotland, Burncastle	1	Dunhome, Margaret	f	Burned (aka Dinham, Dollmoune) (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 114).
1654-6	Scotland, Glenluce	1	?	m	A begger is hanged; the poltergeist Glenluce Devil (probably the teenaged Thomas Campbell) harrassed a local minister (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 457).
1652	Scotland, Highlands	4	???	?	Died under torture (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1652	Scotland, Highlands	2	???	?	Escaped from torture to report to the "English Commission for administration of justice" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1658	Scotland, Edinburgh	18	???	?	Burned at Castle Hill
1661	Scotland	1	Smith, Isobel	f	Tried (Source: Wedeck, A Treasury of Witchcraft).
1661	Scotland	1	Allen, Janet	f	burned (Source: Wedeck, A Treasury of Witchcraft).
1662	Scotland, Auldearne	1	Gowdie, Isobel	f	"Queen of the Witches". She recounted a total listing of her background in witchcraft. Her final fate is unknown (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 232; Wedeck, A Treasury of Witchcraft).

1662	Scotland	1	Lamont, Marie	f	??? (Source: Wedeck, A Treasury of Witchcraft).
1670 (4/11)	Scotland	1	Weir, Thomas	m	A 70 or 76 year old ex-Covenanter Major confessed to incest, adultery and bestiality (although witchcraft wasn't formally charged, it appears to have been taken for granted). Strangled and burned between Edinburgh and Leith (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 457, 534).
1670 (4/12)	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Weir, Jane	f	Thomas Weir's sister. Confessed. Strangled and burned (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 457, 534)
1670	Scotland	1	Oswald, Catherine	f	burned
1670	Scotland, Edinburgh	1	Drummond, Alexander	f	executed
1678	Scotland, Prestonpans	11	???	?	burned
1678	Scotland, St. Andrews	1	???	?	burned
1680	Scotland	1	Thompson, Annaple	f	burned
1680	Scotland	1	Hamilton, Margaret	f	burned
1680	Scotland	1	Pringle, Margaret	f	burned
1680	Scotland	1	Craw, William	m	burned
1680	Scotland	1	Vickar, Bessie	f	burned
1697 (6/10)	Scotland, Strathclyde, Paisley	5	???	?	burned
1697	Scotland, Strathclyde, Renfrew	7	???	?	burned. "24 persons indicted and 7 witches of Renfrew burned following charges of witchcraft by 11 year old Christine Shaw" (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 457).
1697	Scotland	1	Reid, John	m	Hung himself in Prison
1704	Scotland, Pittenweem	1	Corset, Janet	f	(aka, Cornfoot, Corfeitt, Corphat, Carset). Killed by a mob. (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 386, 456).
1704	Scotland, Pittenweem	1	Brown, Thomas	m	Starved to death in the Dungeon. (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 386)
1704	Scotland, Pittenweem	1	Laing, Beatrix	f	Tortured, confessed implicating others. She retracted her confession and was imprisoned for months, eventually being freed. Having to flee the mob, she finally died at St. Andrews (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 386).
1704	Scotland, Pittenweem	1	Lawson, Mrs Nicholas	f	Accused. (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 386).
1705	Scotland, Spott	"Many"	???	?	Burned
1705	Scotland, Spott	1	Rattray, George	m	Executed
1705	Scotland, Spott	1	Rattray, Lachlan	m	Executed
1709	Scotland, Ross?	1	Ross, Elsbeth	f	Last person tried for a general charge of being a notorious witch. She was branded and banished (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
c1718	Scotland, Caithness	2	???	?	The sheriff of Caithness was said to have killed two witches based on the complaint of William Montgomery who was plagued by cats (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).

1720	Scotland, Calder	?	???	f	Women charged on the accusations of Lord Torphichen. 2 of whom died in jail (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 457)
1722	Scotland	1	???	f	(Mother) Burned
1722	Scotland	1	???	f	(Daughter) Burned
1727	Scotland, Ross	1	Horne, Janet	f	Burned for using her daughter as a flying horse (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).
1727	Scotland, Ross	1	Horne, (fnu)	f	(Daughter)Charges dismissed by the judge (Source: Robbins, Encyclopedia, 456).

Historical Witches and Witchtrials in Scotland.

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The Strange Affair of 3X

The murder of Joseph Moyzynsky did not at first capture the public's eye. The College Point, New Jersey grocer's death was first reported in the *New York Times* four days after the crime was actually commited. However, after a series of enigmatic messages and the murder of one, Noel Sowley, were linked to Moyzynsky's death, the strange story of 3X and the Red Diamond League of Russia exploded into one of the "widest man hunt[s] in the history of the New York Police Department" ("2000 Police Patrol Queens in Wide Hunt for Slayer of Two." 1).

On June 11, 1930, Joseph Moyzynsky was shot to death as he sat in his car with 19-year-old Catherine May in Whitestone, Queens, New York. The assailant gave the girl a three by seven inch slip of paper with strict orders that she was not to read the note until the next day ("Police Sifting Clue in Queens Murder" 21). He then escorted her to a bus and sent her home.

The police questioned Miss May, and after three days, they retained her under $50,000 bail (which was later reduced to $5,000) as a material witness, due to the conflicting accounts she gave them, including the implication of the Italian gangster Albert Lombardo, whom the police believed to be nonexistant ("Question Girl in Murder" 13). Later, the girl reportedly admitted that her story was untrue.

Moyzynsky's death received no special treatment until Noel Sowley, a young radio mechanic from Brooklyn, was found dead in his coupe on a secluded road in nearby Creedmore, shot twice in the left temple ("Insane Man Hunted in Second Killing" 27). Like Moyzynsky, Sowley was accompanied by a young woman (a Miss Betty Ring) at the time of his death. According to her report to the police, a lanky man with a thin face and sunken cheeks ("2,000 Police Patrol Queens" 3) leveled a pistol at Sowley and, in a German accent, demanded his driver's license. After glancing over it, the man told Sowley, "You're going to get what Joe got" (Insane Man Hunted" 27). He fired twice, and Sowley slumped over the wheel. The killer then searched Sowley's pockets, but Miss Ring was unable to tell whether he took anything. The lanky man gave Miss Ring a slip of paper similar to that given to Miss May and escorted her home on a bus.

Betty Ring's description of the murderer matched Catherine May's description of Moyzynsky's assailant, but the key clue that linked the two deaths was a newspaper clipping that the police found in Sowley's pocket. The clipping told of Moyzynsky's death, and someone had penciled the phrase, "Here's how" on the margin ("Insane Man Hunted" 27). Later, the police's suspicions were confirmed when ballistic tests showed that the bullets used Joseph Moyzynsky and Noel Sowley were shot from the same gun.

Immediately, the police began what was to be a nineteen day search for the killer, involving 2,000 uniformed patrolmen and 425 specialized units ("2,000 Police Patrol Queens" 1). Patrolmen were sent to guard secluded roads and favorite parking spots for young couples, and others combed the area, looking for the killer who they believed, because of the close proximity of the State Hospital for the Insane at Creedmore, was a lunatic.

The deaths of Joseph Moyzynski and Noel Sowley were also linked to a series of strange warning notes, which were sent to a variety of people, including the New York Police Department and the *New York Evening Journal*. These notes, which frequently mentioned

"international papers," foretold of Sowley's murder and warned that "'another body' would be found in Queens and that ' thirteen more men and a woman' would be murdered ("Insane Man Hunted" 27). The notes were all signed with the cryptic signature of an inverted *V*, followed by the notation "V 3X."

Three days after Sowley was murdered, traces of the killer "3X" appeared in Pennsylvania. A letter written in handwriting identical to that in earlier notes was delivered to Joseph Moyzynsky's brother John, who was living in Philadelphia. The note ordered Moyzynsky's brother to surrender certain documents by placing them in a newspaper and leaving it by the back entrance to the men's room at Broad Street Station on Saturday afternoon. If he did not have the papers, then he was to leave word who had. The note went on to threaten that if if the papers were not surrendered, John Moyzynsky' as well as two others from Philadelphia would pay for it with their lives ("Slayer Now Warns Brother of Victim" 6). Like the others, the letter was signed with an inverted *V*, followed by "V 3X."

Meanwhile, the $10,000 a day man hunt continued. Every day, police brought in suspect after suspect for Catherine May and Betty Ring to examine, only to be told that each suspect was not the man they were looking for. Policemen continued to control the area. Postal workers were given orders to be on the lookout for suspicious characters. Still, "3X" remained at large.

Finally, on June 21, the police received a letter from "3X," in which he stated that his "mission [had] ended" ("Slayings Are Over, New Letter Says" 24). This letter did much to fill in the gaps concerning the person of "3X," his motives, and his connection with Moyzynski and Sowley.

According to the letter, "3X" was a former officer in the German army, who had become a special agent of the Red Diamond of Russia, an international secret society located across the world and composed of all nationalities. (The inverted and upright *V*'s in the signature on the notes represented the organizations. The subsequent notation "3X" was apparently the author's code name.) Noel Sowley and the Moyzynsky brothers had apparently once belonged to the Red Diamond but were discharged for treason after they "turned against" the league and became involved with a gang of blackmailers and drug smugglers ("Slayings are Over" 24).

According to the letter, one of the men stole three secret documents; one militaru, one political, and one commercial, and was using these documents for the purpose of blackmailing the Red Diamond. After the incident was reported the the Supreme Council in Russia, twelve Red Diamond agents randomly drew from a deck of cards. The author of the letter picked the king of diamonds and was therefore "selected to punish, and to inflict death if necessary" ("Slayings Are Over" 24).

The letter affirmed that the last of the documnets had been surrendered, thereby ending the agent 3X's mission. It purported that 3X was returning to Russia, and that any furhter noted would not be authentic. "It is settled," the author declared ("Slayings Are Over" 24).

The matter was far from settled, though. The police appeared to be of the opinion that the letter was merely a cover, and subsequently, only increased their efforts. The search continued, using nearly every angle imaginable. Police searched for a man masquerading as a woman to hide his identity. They combed the area for a body with the idea that he might have committed suicide. They tried to trace the watermark of the slips of paper that were given the murder victims' companions. Suspects were brought in to be inspected by Miss May and Miss Ring, but all were dismissed as having no connection with the murders. (Some suspects looked so similar to the killer, thta it was only after some difficulty that the witnesses cleared them ["Hunt for Suicide as Queens Slayer" 2N].) Still, 3X went uncaptured. Letters claiming to be from the mysterious killer continued to be sent. (Interestingly, all notes received after the June 21 "final letter," in which 3X dismissed all further notes to be phony, were signed only with the notation "3X." The cryptic symbol

representing the Red Diamond of Russia was not used.) Various people had their lives threatened. Queens Borough President Harvey received a telephone call, supposedly from 3X, concerning "government matters" ("Self-styled Killer Phones to Harvey" 9). Mrs. Edna Sanchez, Borough President Harvey's confidential secretary who took the call, told the caller to call back, after which she notified the police. Consequently,her life was also threatened. For over a week, threats continued, but there were no more deaths connected to the slayings. (There was a letter that described the death of an insurance collector, but it was judged to be a fake. The police believed that the note was written in an attempt to throw the authorities off the track of the victim's real murderer ["Find New 3X Note a Fake" 14].) POlice vainly continued to search the area, until the police commissioner finally voiced his opinion that the killer had told the truth when he stated in his letter that his mission was over ("Mulrooney Is Sure '3X' Killer Has Fled" 25). The two hundred patrolmen that had were left guarding Queens roads were withdrawn, but the police investigation continued.

In late August of 1930, Aaron Blattman, a court fingerprints expert, was arrested for making anoymous calls to the police. During these calls, Blattman offered to divulge the name of Joseph Moyzynsky's murderer if the police would post a reward ("Court Aide Is Held in '3-X' Murders" 2). After viewing both Blattman and a friend of his, Catherine May and Betty Ring both agreed that neither man was the one who had shot their companions. Blattman was held under $50,000 bail as a material witness, but he was later released on a writ of habaes corpus "'3-X' Suspect Freed" 7). After the Blattman incident, the 3X case subsided for five and a half years, with just a brief revival in June of 1931. (The police received a note purporting to be from 3X that described the death of an unknown individual and threatened a "Pittsburgh girl between 18 and 25" ["New Death Threat Ends '3X' Silence" 9].)

In June, 1936, almost six years after the murders of Sowley and Moyzynsky, 3X was suddenly thrust back into the public eye when police arrested a young man who confessed to be the puzzling slayer. When questioned, however, the man gave many conflicting accoiunts of the killings, whick caused the district attorney to regard him as a "mental case" ("Officials Doubt '3X' Suspect's Tale" 46). In addition, Miss May and Miss Ring stated that he was definitely not the murderer of their companions, largely because of his age. Upon seeing him, Miss Ring remarked, "The man you want was older in 1930, than this man is today" ("Witnesses Clear Engel, 3-X Suspect" 10). The man was released and committed to the State Hospital for the Insane at Creedmore.

The 3X murders remain unsolved even today. The chief question tthat arisews is who the killer really was. Was 3X the code name of an agent of a murderous underground society, or was it the pseudonym of a delusional maniac? Were all those letters authentic (other than the ones proven to be fake), and if so, why did they contradict each other so much?

Because the 3X affair remains unsolved, there are many theories to consider. Back in 1930, the general public, including the New York Police Department and the *New York Times*, seemed to reagrd 3X as a madman and the Red Diamond of Russia as "the probably mythical group that, he said, dispatched him on his mission of death" ("Slayings Are Over" 24). This is probably the most realistic theory, especially considering the fact that the Creedmore asylum is located less than a mile from where Sowley was shot (although no inmates were reported missing), but it is by no means the only plausible explanation.

A minor, but potentially important, point to consider is Miss Catherine May's role in the 3X affair. Her initially conflicting reports to the police were never satisfactorily resolved, and no ulterior motive that she may have had was ever established. Due to the lack of information about Miss May, that is a point about which we can only speculate.

By far the most appealing (and possibly the most accurate) theory is, in this case, the most fantastic-- that 3X was, in actuality a secret agent sent by an illegal secret society to retrieve stolen documents from defectors. This theory has the flavor of the classic *film noir* genre, and is not as preposterous as it might initially seem. According to 3X's "final letter"

to the police, the Red Diamod of Russia did not recognige the Soviet Union as a legitimate nation. (It is interesting to note that while the Red Diamond opposed the Soviet Union, it identified itself using an internationally recognized symbol of Communism.) There were many anti-Communist groups in Russia during the early 1930's (Brown), and there is the possibility that the Red Diamond was one of these groups, later destroyed during Stalin's Great Purge.

Several pieces of information suggest the validity of this this theory. For example, the incongruency that characterized this incident occured chiefly after June 21, when 3X declared his mission accomplished. Many 3X suspects and letters were proven false, illustrating the morbid fascination that people can have with the macabre, as well as their hunger for publicity. It is not unreasonable to assume that all letters subsequent to June 21 were forgeries. No deaths occured after 3X supposedly retreated to Russia, despite the many threats that were issued. It may seem strange that a former German military officer would be involved in an anti-Communist underground movement in Russia, but the existance of al-Qaeda terrorist cells in non-Muslim countries such as (ironically) Germany demonstrte the internationality of organized crime.

As an unsolved murder, many questions concerning the 3X killings must remain unanswered. The evidence is presented here; it is up to the reader to determine for himself as the the most plausible theory to explain the strange affair of 3X.

--Prof. Quincy J. Sommerfield

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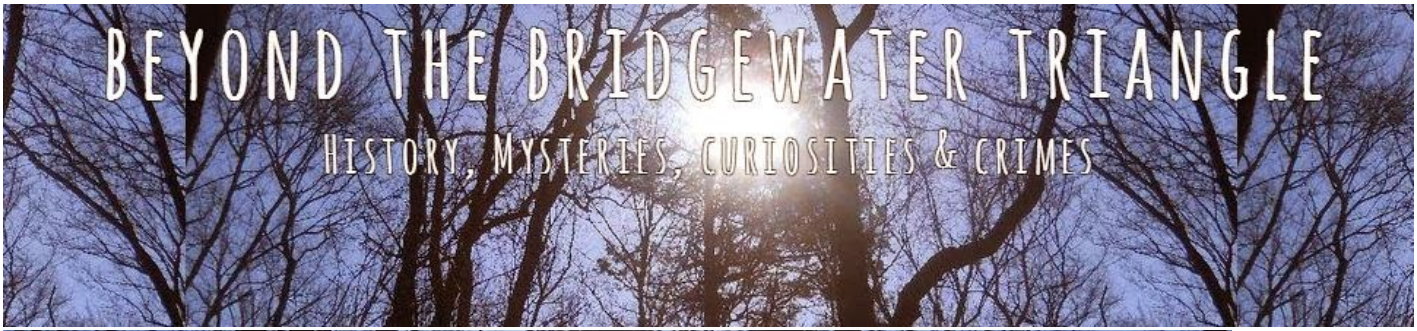
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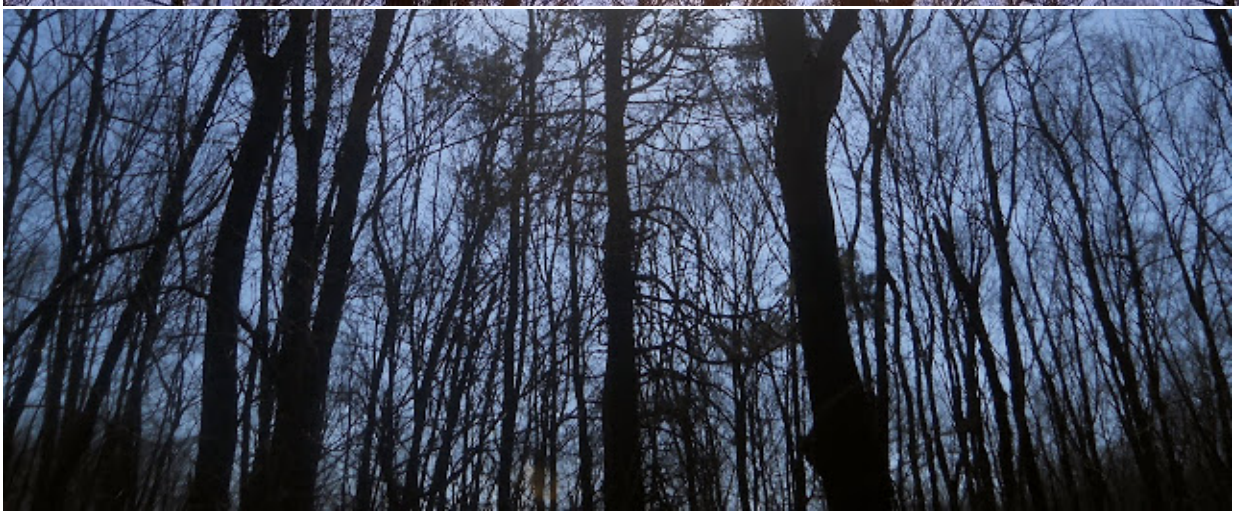
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Hockomock Swamp thebridgewatertriangle.com





"On still nights the evil glitter of fox fire or the demonic cackle of a barred owl sent chills up the spines of the early settlers. Hordes of crows rose each morning for the guts of the swamp to ravage farmers corn. And from time to time, young girls merrily picking blueberries along the fringes found themselves 'drawn farther and farther along unfamiliar paths seduced by the increasing size of the berries until at last they were lost and claimed by the swamp forever."



Native Americans named the swamp "Hockomock" hundreds, perhaps thousands of years ago. Hockomock in the Algonquin word for "place where spirit's dwell." The Indians had tremendous respect and awe for the swamp and regarded it as a "magical" place. There being no swamps in England, the colonists had a different take on the swamp. They were terrified by it. The fear that Hockomock Swamp instilled in the colonists of the 1600s inspired the nicknames "The Devil's Swamp" and "The Devil's Bowl."

Hockomock Swamp is known as the "heart of the triangle." Many Bigfoot, Thunderbird and monster snake sightings and other creatures have been witnessed just outside of the swamp and many believe that these creatures live within it. Others consider these creatures "spirit entities" that seldom appear in our realm. People have reported seeing everything from a four-foot high panther with glowing red eyes to ghosts of Native American spirits. One of the local legends is of a turtle "as big as a Volkswagen beetle". Hockomock Swamp, along with Freetown Forest was named one of the USA Today's "Top Ten Great Haunts" in 2008. Freetown Forest is in Freetown, the southeastern apex of the triangle. It is place filled with negative--many even say evil--energy. The forest is most famous for its murders--especially those of committed by satanic cults. To this day satanic activity is taking place in the forest and it is not uncommon to see the "hooded people" practicing rituals there. Hockomock Swamp is also a place where satanic activity is said to occur and every once in awhile, you will come across a tree in the swamp with strange markings. Voodoo is also practiced in the swamp. The word "Hockomock" is Algonquin for "place where spirits dwell." The colonists called it "Devil's Swamp," no doubt because they feared the unknown terrain of the New England swamps. These thick, seemingly unsurpassable wetlands filled with wolves ready to attack, quicksand, and the sounds of nocturnal animals screeching in the darkness had the colonists scared out

of their minds. One of the first recorded order of business for Bridgewater in 1659 was to order wolf traps to place around the swamp. Legend has it that more than a few colonists who entered the swamp, became disorientated and never came out. Many people have reported getting lost in the swamp, even those who are familiar with the terrain. Just two years ago two seasoned hunters suddenly became disorientated and lost their way. The two men had a terrifying ordeal being lost in the once familiar swamp for hours before being found.





Six Bridgewater Triangle towns spanning two counties--Plymouth and Bristol--get to lay claim to Hockomock Swamp: Easton, Raynham, Taunton, Bridgewater, Norton and West Bridgewater. Nearly 5,000 of its16,900 acres (nearly 27-square miles) are managed by the *Hockomock Swamp Wildlife Management Area*. At its heart, the swamp is a dense tangle of briar and trees, quicksand and mud, a vast no man's land, with many parts—no doubt—having never been encroached upon by human feet. "Ice that forms through the winter months in some areas of the swamp is insulated and shaded from the warming, spring sun. Gradually, during early summer, it melts, and the resulting cooler temperatures offer refuge for sub-arctic plants and animals not indigenous to this area." In sharp contrast, the past 50 years have seen major commercial development to the outer borders of Hockomock Swamp and swathes have been cut through the swamp to create highways such as Routes 24 and 495.

The Hock is host to animals not indigenous to southern Massachusetts, such as Cow Moose, black bears, Africal Sevrel and mountain lions. The tales of animals not indigenous to the area--yet have appeared here—are not told as loudly as the tales of animals not *indigenous to this world*,, for many believe that Hockomock Swamp is home base for a host of fortean creatures including giant pterodactyl-looking Thunderbirds, Bigfoot, anaconda-sized snakes, and giant monster black dogs.

Many people who have explored The Hock have reported abrupt feelings of terror and dread, coupled with the distinct feeling of being watched. Disorientation and losing track of time is another not so *uncommon* occurrence. Satanic cults, priests and priestesses of voodoo, and brothers and sisters of witchcraft are rumored to use parts of the swamp for ritualistic sacrifices and as places of worship. People who live on its fringes certainly have seen and heard it all, from strange human-like screams bellowing from the depths of the swamp, to reports poltergeist activity in their very homes. Some report the frequent appearance of "spooklights" lights hovering above the trees and larger, stranger lights coming from the area of the swamp.

This is what one Bridgewater Triangle resident had to say about growing up on the fringes of Hockomock Swamp: "The neighborhood kids often talked about feeling watched in the swamp, and hearing something bulling through the forest, knocking down trees. We'd also heard of people actually hearing loud, bloodcurdling screams. It wasn't until I was maybe ten or eleven that some friends and I experienced these things for ourselves...along with a whole slew of other phenomenon: disembodied voices, trees being "thrown" at us while deep in the woods, what looked like large human footprints in the corn fields, ghostly forms, strange lights, a strange squeaking sound that seemed to be coming from a plastic toy (a Native American head), that seemed to respond to questions and things we were saying), cult activity, you name it."

Others have reported experiences have the strange phenomenon of being out in the swamp in the middle of the afternoon, only to have it inexplicably turn into night. Here is one of those reports: "It happened a couple of time. I'd be by myself in the swamp near the Prospect Hill Extension. Sundown during deer season is usually between 5 and 6 o'clock. I went to the deer stand and in the swamp it seemed to get dark like an hour before it should have. I'd walk back to the street and it would still be light out." He added: "I lived in that area for over 17 years. I grew up in the swamp exploring it every day. But I always got this weird feeling that I was being watched when I would be coming back from the deer stands after sundown."

Another man who grew up in the triangle area had this to report: "I am very familiar with the Hockomock Swamp. I used to live in West Bridgewater. I have been deep that swamp many times, hunting. I never saw or experienced anything unusual until one day, when I has camping with a buddy on the Town River. We noticed something weird was going on in the sky. There must have been at least 20 of these crazy-shaped aircraft with all kinds of crazy lights going overhead, just above the trees. They weren't high up at all. We couldn't figure out what they were. They were silent. No sound at all. And they were not normal aircraft. That's for sure."

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Home Depot Forced To Pull This Offensive Halloween Decoration From Shelves - iHorror

ihorror.com

By John Squires on September 28, 2016Halloween, News 0

iHorror



peeper

In the year 2016, pretty much everything is offensive, and Halloween has in recent years become enemy number one of those who just can't stop getting offended. Every year we tend to write up at least a couple stories that fit that bill, and this latest one comes our way courtesy of **Fortune**…

Over in Toronto, Ontario, a line of "Scary Creeper Peeper" Halloween decorations recently drew the ire of one Home Depot customer, the woman complaining that the decorations "*make light of predatory behavior against women*." The decorations, which are also available in stores across the US, are meant to be affixed to the outside of windows via suction cups, and they depict either a clown or a creepy dude peering in through the window.

The woman feels that the decorations downplay voyeurism, and she fails to see the humor in them.

"*It makes light of a very serious crime*," she said. "*Voyeurism is a crime in Canada*."

In response to the complaint, Home Depot pulled the decorations off their shelves.

"*We agree that this is not in line with our core values, and when we heard, took immediate action and are currently in the process of removing this product from our assortment*," said a Home Depot spokesperson. "*We've reached out to advise the customer of our actions and apologize. We're sorry for any offense that was caused*."

"*We at Scary Peeper would never, ever, condone any type of violence*," the owners of the company told *Fortune* in a statement. "*Our intention for this product is for it to be used as a fun-spirited prank. We offer our sincerest apologies to anyone who has been offended by our products, and certainly, to those who have been victimized by voyeurs*."

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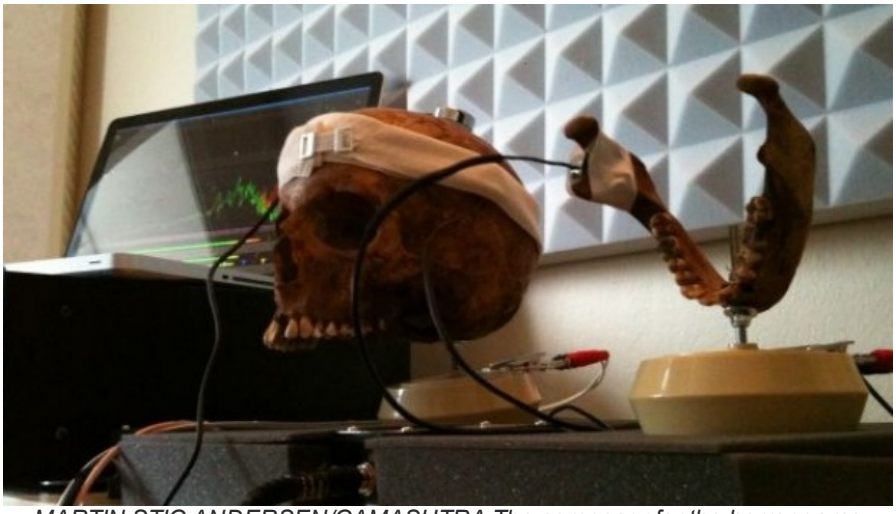
offensive

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Soundtrack made with human skull

stuff.co.nz

stuff Last updated 12:24, October 13 2016



MARTIN STIG ANDERSEN/GAMASUTRA The composer for the horror game Inside has revealed he used a human skull to create the soundtrack.

It turns out one of the gaming world's creepiest games has the creepiest soundtrack to match.

The composer for the horror game *Inside* has revealed he used a human skull to create the soundtrack.

Inside is a side scrolling game from Playdead for Xbox and PC, where people walk through increasingly creepy situations.

Composer Martin Stig Andersen told Gamasutra that he had the idea of working with a human skull because he thought it was interesting how the sound of your own voice sounds very different in your own head.

"This is because a large part of what you hear is your voice resonating inside your body, in your jawbone for example. Try blocking your ears while you speak or sing; that's the sound I'm talking about," he said.

Andersen started his music career studying Orchestra but became increasingly interested in experimental electronic music, taking everyday sounds and extracting musical material from it.

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JPD unclear if people in McDowell Road home were ever held hostage

wjtv.com

WJTV Published: September 22, 2016, 6:03 am Updated: September 22, 2016, 5:08 pm



hostage-situation-09222016-a-by-natay-holmes

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 1:11pm Jackson Police are trying to figure out what happened at a home on McDowell Road. They are now trying to determine if there was ever anyone being held, hostage.We're told that officers did find guns and drugs inside the home. A total of 15 people were in the home. Chief Lee Vance said two people were Asleep and two people were found in the attic. They came to the scene around 5 a.m. after someone inside called officers saying they were being held, hostage. He said they later told them that they weren't being held against their will.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 12:25pm The hostage situation on McDowell Road has ended. Details about what happened are still developing. WJTV will update this when more information is released. We know at least 13 people were released from the home.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 10:50am Chief Lee Vance says another person has come out of the home. This brings the total to 13 people who have been released.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 9:58am The Federal Bureau of Investigation is on the scene assisting the Jackson Police Department SWAT team and hostage negotiation officers. The scene is still active and police say at least one subject is barricaded inside the home.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 9:31am Chief Lee Vance says that a total of twelve people have been able to leave the home. The JPD is still working to get the suspect and any others out of the home.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 9:20am Jackson Police say six more people have been able to get out of the building.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 9:00am Chief Lee Vance says that the hostage situation is confined to the home and that students at Key Elementary School are not in danger.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 8:01am Chief Lee Vance says that they believe that there were eleven or twelve people inside the house, which is believed to be a rooming house. Police have gotten approximately six people out of the home. He says that the JPD is "not in a rush," and they want to do whatever they can to make certain that the hostage negotiations, which are underway now, have a peaceful resolution. "Sometimes these things take longer than other times."

No information has been released as to the identity of the person responsible for holding the hostages.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 7:35am Parents of students who attend Key Elementary School are being told to use an alternate entrance.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 7:25am Police are correcting the location to McDowell and Greenview Drive, not Greenbriar.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 7:11am JPD says, " The death investigation and possible hostage (barricaded subject) situations on McDowell Rd. are not connected at this time."

The death investigation and possible hostage (barricaded subject) situations on McDowell Rd. are not connected at this time.

— Jackson Police Dept. (@JacksonMSPolice) September 22, 2016

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 7:01am Jackson Police say that they are now investigating**the death of a woman** who was found inside a home at 1007 West McDowell Road.

It is not known if the incident is related to the hostage situation.

UPDATE: 09/22/2016 6:12am A media staging area has been established. WJTV will provide live updates from the scene on WJTV 12 and via our **Livestream at WJTV.com**.



Photo Credit: Google Maps google.com/maps/

Key Elementary School is located in the vicinity.

Original Story:

JACKSON, Mississippi (WJTV) – The Jackson Police Department is on the scene of a possible hostage situation on McDowell Road near Greenbriar Street in Jackson.

SWAT and Hostage negotiators are at the location.

WJTV has a crew at the scene. We will provide more information as soon as it is available.

The JPD has said that it will advise the media as the situation develops:

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Hot dogs 'must be renamed' in Malaysia, says religious government body - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC

- 19 October 2016
- From the section Asia



Malaysian food vendors will now have to rename hot dogs or risk a ban

Image copyrightGetty Images

Food outlets selling hot dogs in Malaysia have been asked to rename their products or risk being refused halal certification.

The Malaysian Islamic Development Department, a religious government body, said it adopted the ruling after complaints from Muslim tourists.

Director Sirajuddin Suhaimee said the name might cause "confusion".

"In Islam, dogs are considered unclean and the name cannot be related to halal certification," he said.

Malaysian halal food guidelines say "halal food and halal artificial flavour shall not be named or synonymously named after non-halal products such as ham, bak kut teh, bacon, beer, rum and others that might create confusion," local media said.

Muslim-majority Malaysia practises a moderate form of Islam but conservative attitudes are on the rise.

'Pretzel Sausage'

On Monday, popular pretzel store franchise Auntie Anne's was refused halal certification unless it renamed its "Pretzel Dog". Mr Suhaimee said it was "more appropriate" to call it a "Pretzel Sausage".



Image copyright AP

A representative of the US chain described it as a "minor issue" and said the firm was fine with changing the name on the menu.

'Hot dog is hot dog lah'

Malaysian Tourism and Culture Minister Nazri Aziz slammed the ruling, calling it "stupid and backward".

Pretzel chain Auntie Anne's was refused halal certification unless it renamed its 'Pretzel Dogs'

"Hot dog is hot dog lah. Even in Malay it's called hot dog - it's been around for so many years. I'm a Muslim and I'm not offended," he told reporters, adding that there was no reason for the religious body to take offence at the word.

"It comes from the English language. Please do not make us seem stupid and backward."

The ruling has also garnered ridicule and stirred debate among Malaysians on social media.

"It's just a name, what does it have to do with whether it's halal or not? Muslims should be more concerned with ingredients and the way food is prepared," wrote Eeman Yusof on Facebook.

"You can always count on the authorities to make us look stupid," said another Malaysian Matt Razal.

Another Facebook user said: "Pet shops please rename your dogs as sausages."

"It is complications like this that make our country move backwards," commented YL Chew.

Activist and columnist Marina Mahathir, the daughter of former Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad, criticised the request by the Department of Islamic Development - also known as Jakim.

"Oh we poor easily confused Muslims who have never heard of hot dogs before and who will have no choice but to buy one if one was on the menu," she said in a Facebook post that was shared close to 2,000 times.

Malaysia often prides itself on being a moderate Muslim nation, which allows other religions freedom of worship.

In recent years, there has been greater emphasis on Islamic codes of conduct.

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Image copyright Facebook: Bro, don't like that la, bro

Lincolnshire Free Press editor tries 'Hotter than Hell' pizza - Journalism News from HoldtheFrontPage

holdthefrontpage.co.uk

HOLDTHEFRONTPAGE.co.uk
News, jobs and resources for UK journalists

by David Sharman Published 11 Nov 2016

A weekly newspaper editor says he was “in pieces” after trying to eat a pizza containing one of the world’s hottest chillies.

Lincolnshire Free Press editor Jeremy Ransome attempted to eat the ‘Hotter than Hell’ pizza, produced by supermarket chain Morrisons in Pinchbeck, near Spalding.

The pizza featured a naga chilli, which has a Scoville rating of up to 1 million – making it 200 times spicier than Tabasco sauce, 200 times hotter than a jalapeño, and up to seven times fierier than a vindaloo.

Staff must prepare the pizzas under controlled environments and wear safety goggles, latex gloves and aprons, to shield themselves from the chillies.



The pizza tried by Jeremy and Victoria

Said Jeremy: “One bite and I was in pieces. It’s the hottest thing I’ve ever tasted. My tongue was on fire, my face was boiling and my hair was soaking wet.”

He was joined in the challenge by work experience reporter Victoria Nixon, who added: “I don’t think I will ever eat anything with chilli in it again.”

However the pair fared better than two journalists from The Argus, Brighton, who ended up in hospital after attempting an XXX Hot Chili Burger produced by a restaurant on their patch in 2014.

Assistant news editor Arron Hendy, and trainee reporter Ruari Barratt were both taken by ambulance to the Royal Sussex County Hospital after taking one bite each of the burger.

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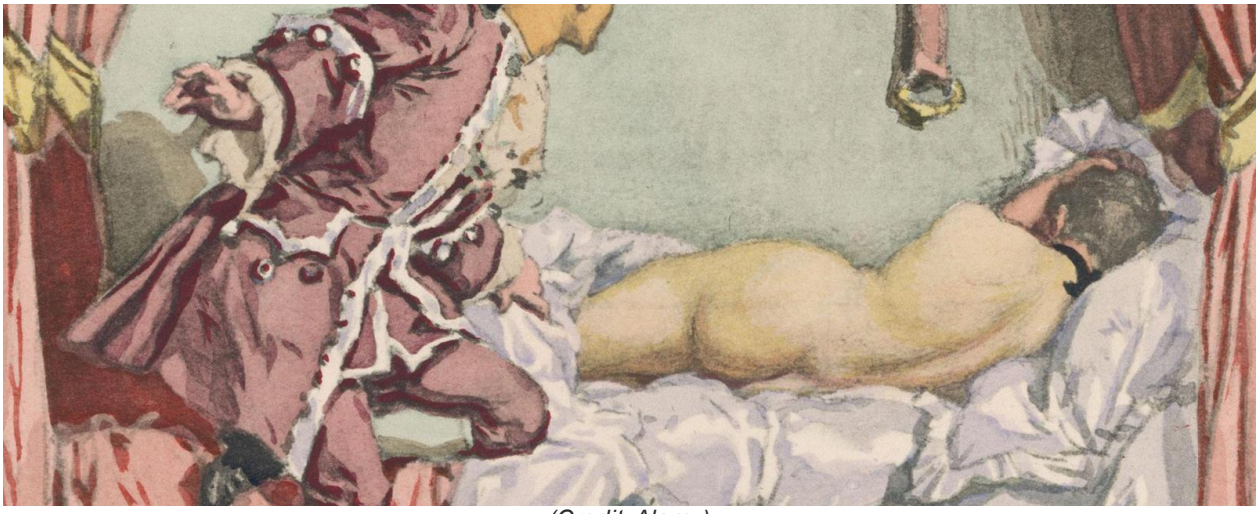
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How Casanova's provocative memoir created a legend

By Hephzibah Anderson 10 November 2016

bbc.com

BBC How Casanova's provocative memoir created a legend



(Credit: Alamy)

The 18th Century Venetian's name is synonymous with sexual adventure. But Casanova's renowned writings reveal a more complex character, writes Hephzibah Anderson.

Casanova is code for cad, rake and roué. A 'Casanova' is the consummate pick-up artist, a sexual adventurer of the type who was swiping right, metaphorically speaking at least, long before your mobile phone became a singles' bar. Above all, a Casanova is not to be believed – he's the kind of guy who'll say anything to get a girl into bed (and yes, he calls women 'girls' – either that or 'ladies', with a lothario's leering emphasis on the first syllable).

It's little wonder, then, that we tend to forget Casanova was a real person who wined, dined and bedded his way around 18th-Century Europe, retiring to write about his exploits in X-rated detail. But that's only half the story. The myth that gave birth to the noun, it turns out, isn't really his creation at all. Moreover, the legacy that he can truly claim as his own is at once less titillating and markedly more fascinating, speaking directly to the heart of how we tell the stories of our own lives and loves in the 21st Century.

Giacomo Girolamo Casanova was born in Venice in 1725, back when the city was a hotbed of vice, famed for its gambling, its courtesans and its carnival. There's a reason it was such an essential stop for well-to-do youths set loose on their Grand Tours, and it didn't have much to do with St Mark's Basilica.

Casanova was born in Venice in 1725, when the city was a hotbed of vice and pleasure (Credit: Getty Images)

Casanova's parents were lowly theatre folk, and at nine, he was sent away from the island to Padua, where he lived with his tutor, whose daughter was responsible for Casanova's first erotic experience. No slouch, he graduated from the University of Padua at 17 with a law degree, having also studied chemistry, maths and medicine, as well as moral philosophy and, informally though no less assiduously, gambling.

A rake's progess



Childhood neighbourhood

Returning to Venice, he took holy orders and lost his virginity – to two sisters of the non-religious kind. The gambling continued and mounting debts eventually landed him in prison. Shortly afterwards, scandal chased him from his position as a cardinal's scribe. He then joined the army but by age 21, had decided to become a professional gambler – another short-lived career move. Next came violinist.



Venice

Returning to Venice from Padua as a young man, Casanova's course was set when he won patronage from a Venetian nobleman (Credit: Getty Images)

His course was finally set when he saved the life of a Venetian nobleman and won patronage in return. From then on, he roamed across Europe, seeking patron after patron, stopping in Paris, Prague and Vienna, Madrid and Moscow, all the while gambling, carousing and engaging in some eye-popping amorous exploits. He dabbled in Kabbalah, Freemasonry and astrology, and attracted the attention not only of the police but also the Inquisition. At 30 he was arrested, and sentenced without trial to five years imprisonment in a cell above the Doge's palace. It was supposed to be inescapable but escape he did – back to France where he helped run a state lottery and became a spy.



Lothario

The lothario roamed around Europe, gambling, carousing and engaging in amorous exploits (Credit: Getty Images)

Each time his debts and lusty scheming catch up with him, he moved on – from France to Holland, England, Belgium, Russia, Spain. A miscalculated prank involving a corpse left a man paralysed; he fought a pistol duel over an Italian actress; he dodged an assassination attempt. By the time he reached his fifties, he'd lost his famed looks and any money that had come his way. He returned to Venice and joined the Inquisition's payroll.

It's a breathless, harum-scarum itinerary, and that's without factoring in his legendary seductions – over 120 in all, if we're to take his word for it. But Casanova also found time for numerous intellectual pursuits. A product of the Enlightenment as much as he was a son of Venice, his polymath proclivities led him to pen mathematical treatises along with a science-fiction novel and a translation of The Iliad into Venetian dialect. He conversed with Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin and Catherine the Great among other celebrities of the period.



Legendary seductions

Casanova's legendary seductions number over 120, according to his memoir (Credit: Alamy)

In 1885, penniless and exiled from Venice yet again (this time he'd published a biting satire of the city's nobility), he found himself in a role almost as incongruous as his youthful dalliance with the priesthood: librarian to a Bohemian count at Castle Dux, in what is today the Czech Republic. Holed up with his fox terriers, it was a lonely, provincial existence, and in many ways a sorry coda to a sybaritic life spent flitting not only between bedchambers, but between some of the 18th Century's most influential salons of power and cultural and intellectual clout. Yet had he not ended up there, his name would not be known today, for it was at Castle Dux that he composed his mammoth 12-volume memoir, *Histoire de ma vie*.

France's Bibliothèque Nationale kept it in a special cupboard for naughty books

He began the project in 1789 on the advice of his doctor, as a sort of proto-Proustian cure for melancholia. As he told a friend in a letter a couple of years later, he would write for 13 hours a day, laughing out loud as he did so: "What pleasure in remembering one's pleasures! It amuses me because I am inventing nothing."



Histoire de ma vie

Casanova composed his 12-volume memoir while working as a librarian at Castle Dux in what is today the Czech Republic (Credit: Wikipedia)

Unaccountably, it ends in mid-sentence, with a 49-year-old Casanova visiting Trieste. Though he shared select passages with friends and failed to burn it before his death in 1798, there is no evidence to suggest that Casanova ever intended the work to be published. Indeed, more than its explicit content, it's the work's length and the level of quotidian detail clotting its pages that made it unpublishable. It was eventually released in 1821, after editors had wielded their red pens. The censors had their way with his text, too, but even so the Vatican added it to their Index of Prohibited

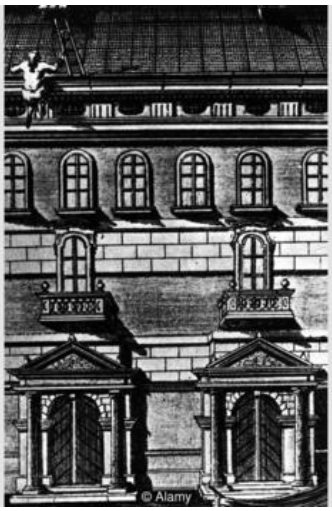
Books. And nor did its notoriety diminish. Towards the end of the 19th Century, France's Bibliothèque Nationale kept multiple editions in a special cupboard for naughty books called *L'Enfer* (Hell).

Sexual revolution

Of course, this all helped keep his legend alive. Today, much as Justin Bieber has Beliebers, Casanova has Casanovists, a crowd made up largely of devoted amateur scholars whose day jobs in advertising or insurance sales might have flummoxed the man himself. Kathleen Gonzalez is a writer and high school English teacher in California, who first fell under his spell while working on a book about Venetian gondoliers. Bobbing along the Grand Canal, buildings would often be pointed out to her as 'the house of Casanova'. Could they all be his? Venice happens to be her favourite city and so, following her passion, she set about writing a guidebook to Casanova's Venice. In contrast with Casanova's own reputation for playing fast and loose with facts, Casanovists are sticklers for details, she says.

> For almost every sexual encounter you get more details about the food than positions – Ian Kelly

And yet like so many aspects of his legend, that unreliability is gradually being dispelled by historians, who've pored over his memoirs and found that the bulk of his claims do indeed stand up. It's part of a broader reappraisal overturning a myth that, as biographer Ian Kelly notes, "is an accident of publishing". Because of *Histoire de ma vie's* girth, what got published initially was the erotica, which was first mistranslated from French into German, and then from French to German to English. "It's actually a small part of his concern in the memoir", Kelly says. "For almost every sexual encounter you get more details about the food than positions. He probably would be appalled by his current fame or infamy".



Story of my flight

It was the length and level of detail in Casanova's memoir rather than explicit nature that made it unpublishable (Credit: Alamy)

It is ironic that the unexpurgated version, which was finally published in French and then English in the 1960s, is a good deal less saucy. At the same time, it established *Histoire de ma vie* as a document vital to social historians, and this in turn – coupled with new research that depicted the 18th Century as the original sexual revolution – paved the way for Casanova's transformation from louche wastrel to Enlightenment innovator. Then, in 2010, the Bibliothèque Nationale purchased the original manuscript for a record $9.6 million (£6.5 million).

> What makes him fascinating is his flawed humanity – Ian Kelly

As if further confirmation of Casanova's metamorphosis were needed, the life of this misunderstood libertine will be making its way onto the stage in March 2017 as a Northern Ballet production, based

on Kelly's biography. It's especially apt given that Casanova himself was described as a dancer, and loved to dance.



Casanovists

Today, much as Justin Bieber has Beliebers, Casanova has Casanovists (Credit: Alamy)

What makes his magnum opus so important, says Kelly, is that gives us a new understanding of self, marking the birth of modern autobiography. And even though we need to get over ourselves and stop tittering at its steamier passages, we also shouldn't discount them. "It shows us an inner as well as an outer person, and one key to that is of course going to be someone's sexuality. What makes him fascinating is his flawed humanity, which does include his willingness to be very open about his romantic and sexual life, very much to his detriment. He writes quite a lot about sexual failure; he's the only non-fiction writer I know who writes about what it is to fail a lover by having premature ejaculation, losing an erection. Dear god, it's not the stuff of his legend! It's immensely brave and the reality of a life as lived, which is touching in its way".

And there you have it: in its immense commitment to detail and unfiltered record, *Histoire de ma vie* anticipates not only modern autobiography, but also every social media update that's had you screaming 'too much information'.

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Massive shark found eating COW in middle of the ocean

20:36, 24 Oct 2016 Updated 20:51, 24 Oct 2016 By Jessica Haworth

mirror.co.uk



A shark is caught eating a cow

This is the astonishing moment a huge shark was seen devouring a cow in the middle of the ocean.

The video, captured by confused onlookers, shows the 16ft-long beast chomping on the cattle.

But amazingly, it was taken far from dry land in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

It was caught on tape by friends who were sailing off the French island of Mayotte when they noticed a tussle in the water.

But as they got closer, they found that the tiger shark was feasting on a horned zebu cow.



A shark is caught eating a cow

The huge shark was seen eating the cow underwater

They shot the video on an underwater camera which showed these amazing scenes, reported the Daily Star .

It is believed to have been taken earlier this month around 500 metres away from the beach.

The beast was caught chomping on the cow

According to the man filming, he believes that the cow fell off another boat boat and into the sea.

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A shark is caught eating a cow

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How Hitler used European aristocracy to clamber his way to power

03:06 EST, 20 September 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

How Hitler used European aristocracy to clamber his way to power and granted a Jewish princess 'honorary Aryan' status for her social contacts

- **New book reveals how aristocracy fell over itself to promote Nazi tyrant**
- **Dictator gave 'honorary Ayran' status to Jewish princess for her contacts**
- **The book also claims Hitler was obsessed with the British royal family**

By Allan Hall In Berlin for MailOnline



Europe's aristocracy fell over itself trying to support and promote Adolf Hitler (pictured) during the Third Reich, a new book published in Germany has revealed

Europe's aristocracy fell over itself trying to support and promote Adolf Hitler during the Third Reich, a new book published in Germany has revealed.

The Nazi dictator even granted 'honorary Ayran' status to a Jewish princess because of her social contacts which Hitler craved to turn to political advantage.

He was obsessed with the British royal family and went out of his way to cultivate contacts with European bluebloods who had links to the House of Windsor, the book claims.

'Hitler's Secret Helpers' by historian Karina Urbach chronicles how the noble families of Germany and Austria were vital to the ambitions of the guttersnipe ex-corporal in his rise to the top.

'Many of them helped in the rise of Hitler and gave him support in the social arena with the glare of publicity falling upon them,' said Frau Urbach.

Despite her Jewish origins, Hitler was particularly spellbound by a woman he called his 'Dear Princess' - Stephanie von Hohenlohe-Waldenburg Schillingsfürst who died in 1972.

The dictator personally gave her the coveted Gold Medal of the Nazi Party for her services to the Reich in 1938 and bestowed on her the Ayran status, even though she was born a Jewish commoner and married into the Austrian nobility.

'She was rewarded because she used her good relations in the nobility for years behind the scenes to open doors for Hitler allowing him to hold political talks with influential people,' said the historian whose work has been received with positive critical acclaim.

Despite her Jewish origins, Hitler was particularly spellbound by a woman he called his 'Dear Princess' - Stephanie von Hohenlohe-Waldenburg Schillingsfürst (pictured) who died in 1972



'Like many other aristocrats, she was one of Hitler's secret helpers.'

Although Hitler boasted that Nazism was the true classless society, where worker and industrialist, aristocrat and bank clerk were equal, it was a myth.

'Due to their close friendship and kinship relationships across national borders, they formed an international network which Hitler used,' added the author.

Another noble he courted and used for his contacts was Prince Max Egon zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, who lived until 1968.

His family had served the German Kaiser, a French marshall, a Cardinal in Rome, numerous Austro-Hungarian generals and field marshalls and even the Russian czars.

'The prince used his international connections in the service of Hitler,' said Frau Urbach.

'There were differences between the Catholic and the Protestant nobility. The former focused on the Imperial Court of the Habsburgs in Vienna, the latter on the royal family in London.

'No matter what prayer book they took on Sunday at the Church, they all could participate if they wanted to in country house diplomacy.'



Although Hitler boasted that Nazism was the true classless society, where worker and industrialist, aristocrat and bank clerk were equal, it was a myth, the book says

The relationship between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy was aided by Prince Philipp von Hessen who led secret German foreign office missions for Hitler which included talks with Pope Pius XII.

'The Hessen prince was married to a daughter of the Italian king and therefore all doors in Rome stood open for him,' said the author.

'At the same time he was close with the British Royal family's relation Carl Eduard, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, a Nazi since the beginning and the main conduit iof Hitler to the English Kings Edward VIII and George VI. related such as also Carl Eduard.

'He tried with his shuttle diplomacy tirelessly to pull England on to the side of Germany.'

Details of German contacts to the British royal family are mostly sealed in archives, as are many of the histories of the German aristocracy.

Urbach finds this 'an intolerable situation' and is fighting for access to the secret of the House of Windsor as well as those of her noble countrymen.

According to her research the age of secret diplomacy ended for the nobility with the end of the Second World War.

Now it is the domain, she says, of scientists, journalists, and especially the clergy 'who took over the task of establishing international networks and policy behind the scenes.'

Comments (

TDLeeds, Leeds, about 22 hours ago

It didn't end well for the Italian princess, Hilter ordered her arrest by the Gestapo and she ended up in Buchenwald concentration camp and was bombed by the allies by mistake.

david patterson, Westminster, United States, about 22 hours ago

I love a good Hitler story. When empires fall, it's always good to have support from the old regimes.

eddie, sunderland, United Kingdom, about 22 hours ago

The British upper class and royalty would have quite happily watched as hitler enslaved Britain

Coln, Glos, United Kingdom, about 22 hours ago

There is no context for a "jewish princess" to occupy, feudal titles were based on conquest and domination. Plus of course the other deviations. Jewish princesses do not exist.

Bill, Kent, about 22 hours ago

He was also financed by Wall Street and Prescott Bush in his rise to power.

Stephen, Lancs, about 22 hours ago

The film of our current Queen practising her Nazi salute says it all.

highjump, Brighton, United Kingdom, about 22 hours ago

Oh good another DM weekly installment of Hitler's daring do's. We hear almost as much about him as we do the Kardashians.

Cheryl, Maritimes, Canada, about 22 hours ago

Pig

Dale, wellington, New Zealand, about 22 hours ago

Not just popular with European royalty, was he? Plenty of English aristos thought H was the bee's knees, and would really sort those Jews out. Read some memoirs which mention 1930s lords and ladies and the antisemitism seeps out.

Dances with bunnies, London UK, United Kingdom, about 22 hours ago

People are starting question WW2 more and more and the true intentions behind it and that can only be a good thing, the truth will come out in the end of that there is no doubt..

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A ghost pepper challenge nearly killed a man by tearing a hole in his esophagus

Kevin Loria 10h 33,866
2016-10-18

businessinsider.com

BUSINESS INSIDER

A ghost pepper challenge nearly killed a man by tearing a hole in his esophagus

PepperParadise/WikiMedia Commons

Our competitive nature may be the thing that pushes us to achieve things never before accomplished and to test the limits of human potential, but that nature can also easily backfire — sometimes with dangerous or deadly consequences.

Recently, a 47-year-old man who showed up at a San Francisco emergency room perfectly demonstrated that fact.

A ghost pepper challenge — people do this sort of thing on YouTube frequently — left him with a hole in his esophagus. That injury could have killed him, but luckily he received treatment first.

Ghost peppers, or Bhut Jolokia, reliably come in near the top of rankings of the hottest, most-painful to consume chilies in the world. (They've been surpassed on the Scoville scale, a measure of the "heat" brought by these carefully cultivated instruments of pain, by several others, including the Naga Viper, Trinidad Moruga Scorpion, and Carolina Reaper.)

Before arriving at the hospital, the patient had been "at a local restaurant featuring a hamburger topped with ghost pepper puree as part of an eating contest," according to a case report published in the journal Clinical Communications by University of California–San Francisco emergency department personnel.

Upon arriving at the ER, doctors noted that he was experiencing severe abdominal and chest pain after the challenge had left him violently "retching and vomiting." For whatever it's worth, the patient had successfully finished the burger.

Potentially deadly consequences

Six glasses of water had done nothing for his pain, unsurprisingly. A medically administered "gastrointestinal cocktail" also failed to alleviate his symptoms, including a heart rate of 106 beats per minute. The doctors write that he continued to grow more and more hypoxic, meaning that not enough oxygen was reaching his organs.

They took him into surgery to put a tube into his chest and collected fluid containing "hamburger, onions, and other green vomitus material," and at the same time, they noticed an esophagal tear just about one inch long. In total, he required three chest tubes and one gastric tube before he began to recover.

The chest tubes were removed after 14 days and he began to be able to tolerate fluids on day 17. After 23 days, the patient was able to leave the hospital, though he he still needed to eat through the gastric tube.

The spontaneous rupture in the esophagus that the patient experienced is known as Boerhaave syndrome, caused by trauma from vomiting. With treatment, 20 to 40% of Boerhaave patients die. Without that treatment, mortality rates approach 100%, according to the case report.

The researchers write that even though hot chilies are known to be "unpleasant," there hadn't been any reason to think more serious side effects like this were possible.

So the next time a friend asks if you are interested in a ghost pepper challenge, you now have a very good reason to say no.

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In a survival situation with no other options, how long would you wait before resorting to cannibalism?

| *October 21, 2016 3:40 PM ET* nationalpost.com



Dustin Parkes
More from Dustin Parkes

I'd like to clarify something from the outset: I'm not looking to eat human flesh. Nevertheless, every time I travel onboard an airplane, I mentally prepare to eat the person next to me.

No, I'm not talking about a little game I play to pass the time before the in-flight movie begins. It's an involuntary reaction to flying. As I buckle in and force a white knuckle grip on my arm rests, I inevitably have a Donner party or Andes plane crash survivors nightmare scenario run through my mind, and I drift toward wondering which of my travel companions I could stomach were I forced into a cannibalism-or-starvation dilemma.

Imagine it: You're on your merry way to a ski vacation in the Alps when the engines conk out, roller coaster butterflies erupt in your stomach as the plane's elevation drops far more quickly than it should. There's a change in pressure, a lack of oxygen. You wake up isolated atop a previously uninhabited mountain with no visible vegetation, no wildlife and no way to signal for help. There are only a few survivors.

At what point do you have "the conversation?"

Consideration of such a question reminds me of one of the funnier bits from the U.S. version of The Office, in which Dwight "establishes a pee corner" within mere seconds of getting stuck in an elevator with Pam.

Certainly, you don't want to be a Dwight, and appear too eager. However, our entire existence as a species is owed to the survival instinct within us. It's a drive that can't be ignored, and eventually, being stranded on the mountaintop long enough without sustenance is going to push the survivors toward cannibalism.

There's no etiquette book spelling out the appropriate amount of time to wait before bringing up the topic of eating other humans, and certainly each situation is going to be different. You don't want to dig in when perfectly fine rations of other food remain available, and you're not going to chow down if you know a rescue is imminent.

Given adequate hydration, the human body can function for more than three weeks without food. But the alpine cold is likely going to be drawing more energy in this situation than normal … and wouldn't you know, the temperature is low enough to preserve the bodies.

As someone with absolutely no qualification to do so, I would say waiting five to seven days after all other rations have been depleted is a respectful amount of time – an amount of time you could justify to your fellow survivors and one that would likely grant you enough rationalization to only slightly scar your psyche should you ever be rescued.

Of course, if I'm honest with myself, I would never be the one to suggest cannibalism in such a scenario. In any social setting, the only thing stronger than my survival instinct is the drive to avoid embarrassment. I never complain. I never reveal an unreadiness for the situation at hand. If invited to a dinner party, the host could theoretically never serve any actual food, and I wouldn't complain. I'd even overstay my welcome a little bit just to prove that the lack of sustenance didn't affect me. In that sense, I'm the perfect dinner guest.

Come to think of it, I'm surprised more people don't want to travel with me.

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How this postcard to Italy from a Nazi labour camp finally got delivered

thelocal.it

Catherine Edwards
24 October 2016
12:58 CEST+02:00

A postcard sent by an Italian prisoner of war from a Nazi labour camp in 1944 has finally been delivered, following a series of strange coincidences which led to a high school teacher stumbling across the card on the street.

"I don't know if it's a case of 'being in the right place at the right time'," teacher Valentina Romano told The Local. "But it was very emotional to find the postcard. When I saw the stamp with the Nazi eagle, I got goosebumps."

Walking home from school last week, she spotted the postcard lying on the pavement, and immediately noticed the wartime postmark.

Dated October 17th, 1944, the postcard was signed by a Roberto Bianchi, writing from Wroclaw - a part of Poland which was at the time occupied by Nazi Germany. He reassured his parents that he was doing well, but wouldn't be able to spend Christmas in Faggeto Lario, the small town in Como where his family lived.

"My dear parents, after a long silence, this is me letting you know that I'm now at another site where I work on the land," Bianchi wrote.

"I'm in the open countryside, in a farmhouse. I've got plenty to eat, so don't worry at all - I'm very well," he says, adding that it won't be possible to return home over Christmas. He signs off with the words: "I'm always close to you in thought. There's nothing left for me to do than send you a kiss, dear mum and dad, I trust that I will soon return to you."



Photo: Valentina Romano/The Local

Romano at first thought the card might have fallen out of one of her students' bags, since they often brought books to school which they had inherited from their grandparents. But when none of them laid claim to the long-lost post, she was determined to track down its owner herself.

"When I got home, I decided to write on Facebook what had happened to me - because it's not every day that you find a postcard from 1944 on the pavement," said the teacher.

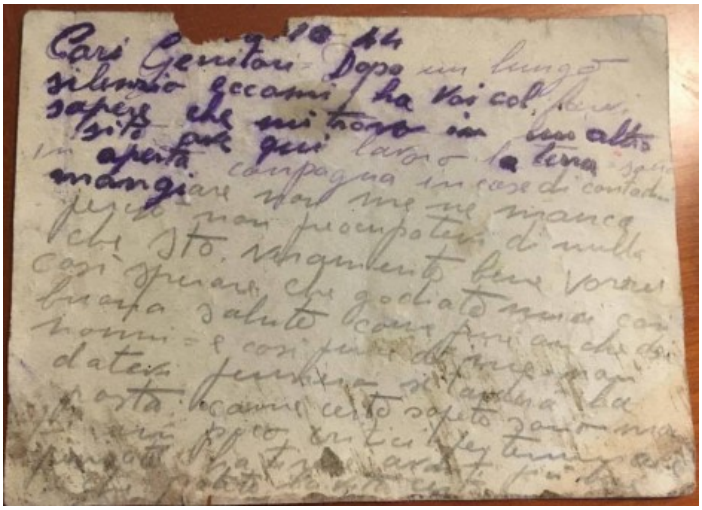
"I wrote out the contents and photographed the postcard, and asked my journalist friends to help me track down the owners of the postcard."

One friend, who worked for the local TV channel, asked Romano to come into the studio to make an appeal in order to locate relatives of the postcard's sender, while dozens of people shared the Facebook post.

Photo: Valentina Romano/The Local

A few days later, the family of the recipient of the card got in touch with the TV channel, who in turn contacted Romano, allowing her to deliver the postcard to Roberto's 74-year-old cousin.

"It was emotional returning the card to Roberto's family, who were grateful, happy and moved. Above all, I was happy to learn that Roberto returned home and lived a long life," Romano said.



She learned that as a 20-year-old soldier, he had been taken as a prisoner of war by Nazi forces and subjected to forced labour.

There were also two surprising coincidences.

"I discovered that he worked as a postman. This is crazy: he was a postman, and I found one of his letters and returned it to his relatives," said Romano. "Another coincidence: my surname is Romano, which is also the first name of Robert's cousin who I gave the postcard to."

Story continues below…

It's unclear how the postcard ended up on the pavement, but the woman who lives in Roberto's old house had recently had a clear-out, so it's likely that the postcard had ended up in a pile of paperwork which got thrown out, and then somehow fell from a rubbish truck onto the street where it caught Romano's eye.

"I don't know how to interpret the whole thing and I don't know why it's happened to me - I've never found so much as a cent on the pavement before! - but it's certainly a story which has an air of poetry and of opportunity," Romano said. "Another opportunity to remember a past which seems long ago, but in reality isn't. And an opportunity not to forget what happened."

Remarkably, Roberto's is the second letter from an Italian prisoner of war to turn up in Italy this year.

In February, a researcher found a letter from a military officer in post office archives. Though it had arrived in Treviso in 1944, it had been lost in the chaos of the war, but the researcher was able to track down the sender's younger brother and pass on the note.

Photo: La Nuova Venezia

The Local Europe AB
Östgötagatan 12
116 25 Stockholm
Sweden

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Huli Jing - The Chinese fox

issendai.com



Foxes reached their full flower in China. Chinese foxes are earnest scholars, dedicated rakes, devoted lovers, seductresses *par excellence*, tricksters, poltergeists, drinking companions, karmic avengers, and always, always great moralizers.

Folklore and Novels • Quotations • Worship • Resources

Chinese Terminology

Hu: Fox.

Huli jing: Fox spirit. Literally, "exquisite fox." Also a modern colloquial term for a dangerous seductress, a slut, or a whore.

Hujing: Fox spirit. An older word which also means "exquisite fox."

Huxian: Immortal fox.

Xian: Immortal or transcendent person. Because foxes were often worshipped in folk religion, they were sometimes called xian (or derivatives thereof, such as xianren) in order to avoid saying their real name, in the same way that English speakers referred to fairies as "the good folk," "the fair folk," "the people under the hill," and so on. Other varieties of immortal creatures were called xian as well.

Jinwei hu: Nine-tailed fox.

Laohu: Old fox. Foxes must attain great age before they can transform into humans, so all shapeshifting foxes are technically old; however, this term carries the connotation of a fox so old that it is old even for a fox. The term also removes some of the sexual connotations of the fox, since sexlessness is associated with age.

Books and Theses

Chan, Leo Tak-Hong. *The Discourse on Foxes and Ghosts*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998. [find it]

Huntington, Rania. *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative*. [find it]

Oh, my sisters and oh, my brothers, this is the book you have been awaiting. Fox worship, foxes and romance, foxes and sex, foxes and transcendence, foxes and ghosts, what to do when you've got a fox living in the guest room. Huntington devotes considerable space to the development of the fox through history, which explains a lot about the contradictions in popular fox stories. And she does this all in a lively and jargon-free style that's a pleasure to read. If you want a taste, scroll down and click on the link to "Foxes and Sex in Late Imperial Chinese Narrative".

Huntington, Rania. *Foxes and Ming-Qing Fiction*. Thesis (Ph.D), Harvard University, 1996.

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Foxes are connected with late Edo peasant uprisings as a symbol of social change, as in "A Tale of a Dream from the Fox Woman Plain," pp. 169-92.

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Coman, B.J. "Mr Tung's Fox Tenants." *Quadrant Magazine* XLIX:6, 2005.

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Examines the relationship between foxes, sex, and Chinese views of the sexes, with a focus on foxes as seductresses rather than wives or romantic heroines. This article became a chapter of Huntington's book *Alien Kind*.

Download a free copy of this article (and the rest of this issue of *Nan Nü*) from Ingenta Select.

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Fox Worship

The Chinese worshipped foxes, though never at the level of official religion. Instead, foxes were a part of folk religion. This unofficial worship reached to the highest levels of society; in the late 1920's, in a family shrine ostensibly dedicated to the Buddha, Kuan Yin, and other official deities, Lao Tai-tai, an aristocratic woman of Beijing, shows off her family's icon of a fox:

"This," [Lao Tai-tai] said with a beaming smile, "is the best of all."

"And who is this?" I asked, for I did not recognize the scholarly-looking old man in the picture hanging on the west wall, the little old man with the intelligent, shrewd face. He was sitting in a garden with a great tree behind him and flowering shrubs around, dignified in his long flowing blue silk robes and tall black hat of a long-past dynasty.

"He is the Second Son of the King of the Fox Fairies. He was so good and learned that he was allowed to take human form. We worship him for scholarship and for official position and for wealth." These, I knew, were synonymous to most of the people. She lit a big bundle of incense and set it in the burner on the table. (*Old Madam Yin: A Memoir of Peking Life*, by Ida Pruitt, p. 35)

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Monster of the Week: Huli Jing

thesupernaturalfoxsisters.com

Posted on August 9, 2016 by The Supernatural Fox Sisters



After aging for 1,000 years, a huli jing becomes a jiuwei hu (nine-tailed fox)

Accounts of foxes with supernatural powers have existed for millennia. The huli jing (狐狸精 *húlijīng*) is a fox spirit that arose out of Chinese traditions, predating the Japanese kitsune and Korean kumiho. Despite attempts to suppress the practice, the huli jing was venerated at household shrines throughout China for many centuries.

The fox can be a force of benevolence or malevolence, depending on its individual nature, thus the intentions of these mischievous creatures are suspect when they interact with humans. A huli jing may attempt seduction to steal human essence, curse those they seek vengeance against, reward worshippers with wealth, or provide sage guidance.

"Without fox demons, no village is complete." —Chinese proverb

Chinese Fox Spirits



Nine tails fox, from the Qing edition of the Shanhaijing .

In Chinese, *húli* means 'fox' and *jīng* is the word for essence. The huli jing is believed to be a creature of yin that consumes masculine yang energy. Huli jing is used as a colloquial expression for what is seen as the dangerous power of those with seductive beauty, with the negative connotation of licentiousness.

Hujing is an older term used to describe fox spirits. *Laohu* (aged fox) refers to long-lived foxes. Foxes described as *Huxian* (狐仙) are those who are transcendent or immortal. *Jiuwei hu* (九尾狐) refers to a nine-tailed fox, the oldest and most magical of foxes.

Transformation

As huli jing age, their magical abilities increase. A long-lived fox spirit can transcend from a lower animal to a human, then to a transcendent being. As a fox ages it becomes an expert at deception and seduction, with countless varieties and transformations.

"At the age of fifty, a fox can change into a woman. At the age of a hundred, it can change into a beautiful girl or a wizard or a man who seduces women; it can know about happenings a thousand li distant; it can bewitch people, leading them astray and causing them to lose their wits. At the age of a thousand, it can communicate with heaven and become a celestial fox."
— Kuo Po, AD 324



Unlike a kitsune or kumiho, which tend to take the form of a beautiful woman, a huli jing can appear as a woman or a man who is either young or old. The huli jing often presents as a beautiful young woman set on seduction, but it can also take the form of a charming young man or a wise elder. When a huli jing appears in a human disguise, it's safe to assume that it's up to no good.

The fox characteristics of the huli jing sometimes slip through despite the transformation, with a tail or ears emerging from its human form.

"A fox's tail is not easily hidden." — Chinese proverb

Nine-tailed fox (right) as an attendant of the goddess Xiwangmu on a Han dynasty tile. Sichuan Provincial Museum.

If a fox in human form is discovered, humans may kill it for its trickery without fear of reprisal. All spirit foxes, whether huli jing, kitsune, or kumiho, are afraid of dogs. When confronted by a dog, a fox in human form may become so unnerved that it will revert to its true vulpine figure and flee. Some accounts claim that huli jing can only take on the appearance of a human during the day.

Abilities and Nature

Huli jing are shapeshifters who develop the ability to transform into human form as they age. According to some accounts, the transformation involves a ritual in which the fox places a human skull on its head.



Running Fox by LouieLorry on DeviantArt

Other supernatural powers include creating illusions or glamours, human speech, the ability to disappear and reappear, becoming mist-like, communicating with Heaven, and immortality. The appearance of foxes can be an omen of death, foretelling war and disaster.

In China, the morality of foxes is ambiguous. The manner in which huli jing interact with humans can be characterized as good or evil, depending on their nature. Spirit foxes present in a variety of ways: through a dream, haunting people or places, causing sickness or death, granting wealth or prosperity, providing healing or fertility services, or delivering moral advice.

"Some say that when the yelping kind [of fox] are old, they become monsters. They wear a dry skull on their heads, clothe themselves with oak leaves, and assume a human guise. These creatures do harm in countless ways. People set fire to the mountains and dig up their burrows, grasping arrows and driving their hounds, thinking if fox kind is eradicated, monstrosity will cease. They do not know that although foxes can become monsters, they do not necessarily do so. Once in a while one becomes a monster, but they do not all become monsters. …"

—He Bang'e, 1791, in *Occasional Records of Conversations at Night*

The most common type of malicious trick used by huli jing is to take human form for the purposes of seduction. Sexual congress is one of the ways foxes can take human essence or vitality. Stealing another's life force can also be accomplished while remaining in fox form, as huli jing are known to take their victim's breath as they sleep. Foxes also like to deceive humans and play the role of a trickster.



Some huli jing help humans while others just want to steal their vitality. Image from heatherswaterworks.blogspot.com

Benevolent foxes, on the other hand, are known to help humans in a variety of ways. They can remain faithful to a spouse, help to find lost items, and provide gifts such as wealth, prosperity, and immortality. Some huli jing strive for self-improvement through seclusion and meditation in an effort to ascend to divinity.

Not all huli jing are created equal. The most superior foxes practice self-cultivation by absorbing essence from nature in order to refine their spirit. Through meditation and purification, foxes with these natural powers seek to attain immortality and divinity. Foxes who lack this skill instead cultivate their physical appearance in order to bewitch, delude, and possess people. By assimilating humans' life essence, foxes enrich their own spirit. The huli jing has an ambiguous nature—a trickster striving for spiritual transcendence.

"Those [foxes] who seek alchemical transformations and try to gather spiritual essences are like scholars who attain fame by studying diligently. Those who entice men and deplete them of their sexual energies for their own benefit are taking short-cuts to achieve their goal quickly. But only [the former] can roam the islands of the immortals and ascend to the celestial realms; [the latter], by bringing harm to too many lives, often violate the code of Heaven."

– Ji Yun, 1789, in *Notebook from the Thatched Cottage of Close Scrutiny*

The Path of the Huli Jing



Huli jing follow their own path. Image from EatSleepDraw.com (November 16, 2013)

After fifty or a hundred years of spiritual cultivation, a fox develops the ability to transform itself into a human being, growing in power and magical abilities and it continues to age. This transformational process is part of the huli jing's attempt to ascend to a higher state of being.

"Transcendents and monsters travel different paths, but foxes are between transcendents and monsters. Therefore one could say to meet a fox is strange; one could also say it is ordinary."
– Ji Yun, 1789, in *Notebook from the Thatched Cottage of Close Scrutiny*

Though one should be wary of foxes in need of human essence on their path to immortality, they should be treated respectfully. They may be mischievous tricksters, but huli jing are also intelligent, devoted, and spiritual creatures.

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Austrian customs officials find human intestines in luggage

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press September 27, 2016

VIENNA (AP) — Austrian customs officials are used to finding unusual items in travelers' luggage. But human intestines were not on their list — until now.

The Austrian Press Agency reports that the organ parts were found packed tightly in plastic containers and formaldehyde in a Moroccan woman's baggage during a recent check at the airport of the southern city of Graz.

It said Monday that the woman told police that she had brought the intestines of her dead husband to Austria to have them examined because she thought he had been poisoned.

The tissue is being subjected to a pathological analysis. Pathologist Gerald Hoefler told state broadcaster authorities in Morocco where the man died gave the cause of death as intestinal obstruction, a diagnosis he says is plausible.

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Skull washes up

stuff.co.nz

PHILLIPA YALDEN

Last updated 08:09, October 11 2016



CHRISTEL YARDLEY/FAIRFAX NZ A human skull has been found washed up on a beach in Raglan.

A human skull has washed up on a Raglan beach.

The skull was found on the beach near the harbour entrance off Riria Kereopa Memorial Drive in the coastal Waikato town on Monday.

A police spokesperson said the discovery was not being treated as suspicious.

"The area is believed to be an old burial site that has been disturbed," she said.

"Police have liaised with iwi on the matter and they have blessed the site and the remains."

She said iwi had taken custody of the remains, which would be examined by an archeologist.

Exactly how old the skull was is not yet known.

Earlier this year historic human bones were unearthed on a new section of the Waikato expressway in Huntly.

The "koiwi", or pre-European, bones were found in a shell midden, or rubbish site uncovered by contractors laying culvert between Ralph Road and Lake Kimihia.

They are estimated to be from the late 1700s.

The remains were lifted by an archeologist and sent to Auckland University to be examined by a physical anthropologist to determine the age, sex and possibly health of the person depending on the state of the remains, Project archaeologist, Dr Warren Gumbley said.

Material around the site was used to date the burial.

"It is an interesting site as the midden is shell midden, which would normally be found in more permanent coastal settlements. What we do know is they often used this shell inland in temporary settlements.

"We have also found a kumara pit at the site which suggests it may have been a temporary, seasonally occupied site, as opposed to a more permanent pa."

This was the first discovery of significance on the site of the new four lane bypass extending from Ohinewai to Ngaruawahia.

Back in 2007 a barnacle encrusted human skull washed up on the Firth of Thames.

A Te Awamutu couple walking the beach made the discovery opposite the Miranda Shorebird Centre. It was sent off to an Auckland pathologist.

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Hundreds of Germans are living as if the Reich never ended

20161112

economist.com

The "Reichsbürger" maintain the Federal Republic is a Jewish-controlled conspiracy

Nov 12th 2016 | BERLIN | From the print edition



MANY Germans assume that nowadays it is others, especially Americans, who are prone to conspiracy theories and the rantings of paranoid megalomaniacs. By contrast Germans, forever chastened by a Nazi past, are doomed to boring responsibility. This makes the exceptions all the more fascinating. One is the tiny but growing movement of "imperial citizens".

The so-called *Reichsbürger* are convinced that the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) does not exist. In its place the old German Empire endures, which in their telling was never properly abolished and persists in the borders of either 1871 or 1937. There are nearly as many lines of pseudo-legal reasoning as adherents. One rests on the fact that the Allies never signed a peace treaty with Germany after the second world war. Another cites selectively from a decision by Germany's supreme court in 1973 regarding an agreement between West and East Germany. The upshot, say *Reichsbürger*, is that the Federal Republic is really a limited-liability company based in Frankfurt and controlled by a Jewish world government based in America.

To the *Reichsbürger* the FRG's police, judges, laws and tax agencies thus have no authority, and its documents carry no weight. At a traffic stop, say, a *Reichsbürger* will overwhelm the (usually puzzled) police with references to phony legal paragraphs and treaties while producing a driver's licence or other identification issued by the Empire. The insignia vary because it is not clear even to the *Reichsbürger* who the true imperial government-in-waiting is. There are about 30 rival imperial chancellors, several princes and at least one king. One of the chancellors, a man named Norbert Schittke, also claims the English throne.

Though they draw ridicule even from neo-Nazis, the *Reichsbürger* are considered part of the extreme right. Many (though not all) are racist and anti-immigrant. Most are male and live in rural areas. Of the four regions that monitor their numbers, Brandenburg and Thuringia, both in eastern Germany, have the most, with several hundred identified in each. Worried about a rise in incidents, a think-tank in Brandenburg recently published a handbook for bureaucrats dealing with *Reichsbürger*.

The best approach, it advises, is to avoid responding at all. Typically, a *Reichsbürger* will only deluge a bureaucracy with verbose letters studded with obscure citations. Others get aggressive. Some 20 interrupted a trial this year and tried to "arrest" the judge. The first case of armed violence occurred in October. Wolfgang P., a hunter in Bavaria, had outed himself as a *Reichsbürger* in the course of disobeying local authorities. When officers approached his house to confiscate his rifles, he opened fire from the upper floor, injuring several and killing one. Locals told the press that the 49-year-old was a loner raised by his grandmother, whose death had apparently unhinged him.

This article appeared in the Print Edition with the headline: *The Reich lives on*

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Hundun

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Hundun (Chinese: 混沌; pinyin: *Hùndùn*; Wade–Giles: *Hun-tun*; literally: "muddled confusion") is both a "legendary faceless being" in Chinese mythology and the "primordial and central chaos" in Chinese cosmogony, comparable with the World egg.

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- 1 Linguistics
- 2 Early textual usages
  - 2.1 Confucian texts
  - 2.2 Daoist texts
  - 2.3 Other texts
- 3 Interpretations
- 4 In popular culture
- 5 See also
- 6 References
- 7 External links

Linguistics

Hundun 混沌 was semantically extended from a mythic "primordial chaos; nebulous state of the universe before heaven and earth separated" to mean "unintelligible; chaotic; messy; mentally dense; innocent as a child".

In modern Written Chinese, *hùndùn* "primordial chaos" is 混沌, but Chinese classic texts wrote it either 渾沌 (in the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi*, etc.) or 渾敦 (*Zuozhuan*). *Hùn* "chaos; muddled; confused" is written either *hùn* 混 "abundantly flowing; turbid water; torrent; mix up/in; confuse; muddle through; drift along; thoughtless; senseless" or *hún* 渾 (Simplified Chinese character 浑) "sound of running water; muddy; muddled; turbid; concealed; confused; dull; stupid; unsophisticated; whole; all over". These two are interchangeable graphic variants readable as *hún* 混 "muddy; dirty; filthy" (e.g., Mandarin slang *húndàn* 渾蛋/混蛋 "filthy egg"; bastard; scumbag") and *hùn* 渾 "nebulous; stupid" (*hùndùn* 渾沌). *Dùn* "dull; confused" is written either *dùn* 沌 "dull; confused; stupid" or *dūn* 敦 "thick; solid; generous; earnest; honest; sincere".

Isabelle Robinet outlines the etymological origins of *hundun*.

> Semantically, the term *hundun* is related to several expressions, hardly translatable in Western languages, that indicate the void or a barren and primal immensity – for instance, *hunlun* 混淪, *hundong* 混洞, *kongdong* 空洞, *menghong* 蒙洪, or *hongyuan* 洪元. It is also akin to the expression "something confused and yet complete" (*huncheng* 混成) found in the *Daode jing* 25, which denotes the state prior to the formation of the world where nothing is perceptible, but which nevertheless contains a cosmic seed. Similarly, the state of *hundun* is likened to an egg; in this usage, the term alludes to a complete world round and closed in itself, which is a receptacle like a cavern (*dong* 洞) or a gourd (*hu* 壺or *hulu* 壺盧). (2007:524)

Most Chinese characters are written using "radicals" or "semantic elements" and "phonetic elements". *Hùndùn* 混沌 is written with the "water radical" 水 or 氵 and phonetics of *kūn* 昆 and *tún* 屯. *Hùndùn* "primordial chaos" is cognate with Huntun (*húntun*, 餛飩, 馄饨) "wonton; dumpling soup" written with the "eat radical" 食. Note that the English loanword *wonton* is borrowed from the Cantonese pronunciation *wan*^{4}*tan*^{1}. Mair (1994:16) explains *hundun* and *wonton*, "The undifferentiated soup of primordial chaos. As it begins to differentiate, dumpling-blobs of matter coalesce. … With the evolution of human consciousness and reflectiveness, the soup would have been adopted as a suitable metaphor for chaos."



A shrimp wonton

Hundun 混沌 has a graphic variant *hunlun* 混淪 (using *lún* 淪/沦 "ripples; eddying water; sink down", see the *Liezi* below), which etymologically connects to the mountain name Kunlun 崑崙 (differentiated with the "mountain radical" 山). Robinet (2007:525) says, "Kunlun and *hundun* are the same closed center of the world."

Girardot (1983:25) quotes the Chinese philologist Lo Mengci 羅夢冊 that reduplicated words like *hundun* "suggest cyclic movement and transformation", and speculates.

> Ritually mumbling the sounds of *hun-tun* might, therefore, be said to have a kind on incantatory significance that both phonetically and morphologically invokes the mythological and ontological idea of the Tao as the *creatio continua* process of infinitely repeated moments of change and new creation.

The *Shuowen Jiezi* does not enter *dun* 沌 (which apparently lacked a pre-Han Seal script). It defines *hun* 混 as *fengliu* 豐流 "abundantly flow", *hun* 渾 as the sound of *hunliu* 混流 "abundantly-flowing flow" or "seemingly impure", *dun* 敦 as "anger, rage; scolding" or "who", and *lun* 淪 as "ripples; eddies" or "sink into; disappear".

English *chaos* is a better translation of *hundun* in the classical sense of *Chaos* or *Khaos* in Greek mythology meaning "gaping void; formless primordial space preceding creation of the universe" than in the common sense of "disorder; confusion". The latter meaning of *hundun* is synonymous with Chinese *luàn* 亂 (Simplified 乱) "chaos; disorder; upheaval; confusion; turmoil; revolt; indiscriminate; random; arbitrary". Their linguistic compound *hùnluàn* 混亂 (lit. "chaos-chaos") "chaos; disorder; confusion" exemplifies the "synonym compound" category in Chinese morphology.

Early textual usages

In the Chinese written record, *hundun* first appears in classics dating from the Warring States period. The following summary divides them into Confucianist, Daoist, and other categories, and presents them in roughly chronological order, with the caveat that many early textual dates are uncertain.

Confucian texts

Hundun only occurs in one Confucian classic, the *Zuozhuan* commentary to the *Chunqiu*. Most early Confucianist ancient texts (*Lunyu*, *Shujing*, *Yijing*, etc.) do not even use *hun*, with four exceptions. One, the *Mengzi*, uses *hun* in its original meaning "sound of flowing water". Mencius explains why Confucius praised water, "There is a spring of water; how it gushes out!" (tr. Legge 1872 2:324). The other three use *hun* as what Girardot (1983:119) calls "a term of opprobrium and condemnation related to the suppression of the "barbarians" or the "legendary rebels"." The *Shijing* (237) mentions Hunyi 混夷 "ancient Hunni tribe in Turan". When King Wen of Zhou opened up the roads, "The hordes of the Keun [sic] disappeared, Startled and panting. (tr. Legge 1872 4:441). The *Chunqiu*

mentions the Luhun 陸渾 tribe of the Rong 戎 people, "the Jung of Luh-hwăn" (tr. Legge 1872 5:293, 667). The *Zuozhuan* commentary to the *Chunqiu* notes they were originally from western Gansu and forced into northern Henan.

Another *Zuozhuan* context refers to Hundun 渾敦 as a worthless son of the Yellow Emperor, one of the mythical *Sixiong* 四凶 "Four Fiends" banished by Shun.

> The ancient emperor Hung [Hwang-te] had a descendant devoid of ability [and virtue]. He hid righteousness from himself, and was a villain at heart; he delighted in the practice of the worst vices; he was shameless and vile, obstinate, stupid, and unfriendly, cultivating only the intimacy of such as himself. All the people under heaven called him Chaos. … When Shun became Yaou's minister, he received the nobles from the four quarters of the empire, and banished these four wicked ones, Chaos, Monster, Block, and Glutton, casting them out into the four distant regions, to meet the spite of the sprites and evil things. (tr. Legge 1872 5:283)

The other "fiends" are Qiongqi 窮奇, Taowu 梼杌, and Taotie 饕餮. Legge notes this passage "is worthy of careful study in many respects."

Girardot (1983:129) contrasts these rare Confucian usages of *hundun* pejoratively suggesting the forces thwarting civilization, "the "birds and beasts," barbarian tribes, banished ministers, and legendary rebels)" with the common Daoist usages in a "paradise lost theme".

Daoist texts

Hundun commonly occurs in classics of philosophical Daoism. The *Daodejing* does not mention *hundun* but uses both *hun* graphic variants. One section (49, tr. Mair 1990:17) uses *hun* 渾 "bemuddle": "The sage is self-effacing in his dealings with all under heaven, and bemuddles his mind for the sake of all under heaven." Three others (14, 15, 25, tr. Mair 1990:74, 76, 90) use *hun* 混 "bound together," "muddled," and "featureless":

- "These three cannot be fully fathomed, Therefore, They are bound together to make unity."
- "plain, as an unhewn log, muddled, as turbid waters, expansive, as a broad valley"
- "There was something featureless yet complete, born before heaven and earth."

The *Zhuangzi* (ca. 3rd-2nd centuries BCE) has a famous parable involving emperors *Hundun* 渾沌, *Shu* 儵 "a fish name; abrupt; quick", and *Hu* 忽 "ignore; neglect; sudden". Girardot (1983:89) cites Marcel Granet that Shu and Hu synonymously mean "suddenness; quickness" and "etymologically appear to be linked to the images of lightning and thunder, or analogously, flaming arrows." The "Heavenly Questions" chapter of the *Chu Ci* uses Shu and Hu as one name: "Where are the hornless dragons which carry bears on their backs for sport? Where is the great serpent with nine heads and where is the Shu-Hu?" (tr. Hawkes 1985:128)

> The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu [Brief], the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu [Sudden], and the emperor of the central region was called Hun-tun [Chaos]. Shu and Hu from time to time came together for a meeting in the territory of Hun-tun, and Hun-tun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. "All men," they said, "have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hun-tun alone doesn't have any. Let's trying boring him some!" Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hun-tun died. (7, tr. Watson 1968:97)

Compare Watson's renderings of the three characters with other *Zhuangzi* translators.

- Change, Suddenness, Confusion (or Chaos) — Frederic H. Balfour
- Shû, Hû, Chaos — James Legge
- Change, Uncertainty, Primitivity — Yu-Lan Fung
- Shu, Hu, Hun Tun — Herbert Giles
- Immediately, Suddenly, Undifferentiation — James R. Ware
- Light, Darkness, Primal Chaos — Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English
- Fast, Furious, Hun-t'un — A.C. Graham
- Lickety, Split, Wonton — Victor H. Mair
- Change, Dramatic, Chaos — Martin Palmer
- Helter, Skelter, Chaos — Wang Rongpei

Two other *Zhuangzi* contexts use *hundun*. Chapter 11 has an allegory about Hong Meng 鴻蒙 "Big Concealment" or "Silly Goose", who "was amusing himself by slapping his thighs and hopping around like a sparrow", which Girardot (1983:110) interprets as shamanic dancing comparable with the *Shanhaijing* below. Hong Meng poetically reduplicates *hunhun-dundun* 渾渾沌沌 "dark and undifferentiated chaos" in describing Daoist "mind-nourishment" meditation.

> "You have only to rest in inaction and things will transform themselves. Smash your form and body, spit out hearing and eyesight, forget you are a thing among other things, and you may join in great unity with the deep and boundless. Undo the mind, slough off spirit, be blank and soulless, and the ten thousand things one by one will return to the root – return to the root and not know why. Dark and undifferentiated chaos – to the end of life none will depart from it. But if you try to know it, you have already departed from it. Do not ask what its name is, do not try to observe its form. Things will live naturally and of themselves." (tr. Watson 1968:122)

Chapter 12 tells a story about the Confucian disciple Zigong becoming dumbfounded after meeting a Daoist sage. He reported back to Confucius, who denigrated *Hundun Shi zhi shu* 渾沌氏之術 "the arts of Mr. Chaos [Hundun]":

> "He is one of those bogus practitioners of the arts of Mr. Chaos. He knows the first thing but doesn't understand the second. He looks after what is on the inside but doesn't look after what is on the outside. A man of true brightness and purity who can enter into simplicity, who can return to the primitive through inaction, give body to his inborn nature, and embrace his spirit, and in this way wander through the everyday world – if you had met one like that, you would have had real cause for astonishment. As for the arts of Mr. Chaos, you and I need not bother to find out about them." (12, tr. Watson 1968:136)

The *Huainanzi* has one occurrence of *hundun* 渾沌 in a cosmological description.

> Heaven and earth were perfectly joined [*tung-t'ung* 洞同], all was chaotically unformed [*hun-tun wei p'u* 渾沌為樸]; and things were complete [*ch'eng* 成] yet not created. This is called [the time or condition] of the Great One. [*t'ai-i* 太一]. All came from this unity which gave to each thing its differences: the birds, fish, and beasts. This is called the lot [or division, *fen* 分] of things. (14, tr. Girardot 1983:134)

Three other *Huainanzi* chapters use *hun*, for example, the compound *hunhun cangcang* 渾渾蒼蒼 "pure and unformed, vast and hazy".

> The world was a unity without division into classes nor separation into orders (lit: a disorganised mass): the unaffectedness and homeliness of the natural heart had not, as yet, been corrupted: the spirit of the age was a unity, and all creation was in great affluence. Hence, if a man with the knowledge of I [羿 A mythical person of great powers] appeared, the world had no use for him. (2, tr. Morgan 1934:46)

The *Liezi* uses *hunlun* 渾淪 for *hundun*, which is described as the confused state in which *qi* 氣 "pneuma; breath", *xing* 形 "form; shape", and *zhi* 質 "matter; substance" have begun to exist but are stilled merged as one.

> There was a Primal Simplicity, there was a Primal Commencement, there were Primal Beginnings, there was a Primal Material. The Primal Simplicity preceded the appearance of the breath. The Primal Beginnings were the breath beginning to assume shape. The Primal Material was the breath when it began to assume substance. Breath, shape and substance were complete, but things were not yet separated from each other; hence the name "Confusion." "Confusion" means the myriad things were confounded and not yet separated from each other. (1, tr. Graham 1960:18-19)

Other texts

The *Shanhaijing* collection of early myths and legends uses *hundun* 渾敦 describing a *shen* 神 "spirit; god" on Tian Shan 天山 "Heaven Mountain".

> There is a god here who looks like a yellow sack. He is scarlet like cinnabar fire. He has six feet and four wings. He is Muddle Thick. He has no face and no eyes. He knows how to sing and dance. He is in truth the great god Long River. (2, tr. Birrell 2000:226)

This "great god Long River" translates Di Jiang 帝江 "Emperor Yangtze River", which is identified with Huang Di 黃帝 "Yellow Emperor". Toshihiko Izutsu (1967 2:19, cited by Girardot 1983:82) suggests that singing and dancing here and in *Zhuangzi* refers to shamanic trance-inducing ceremonies, "the monster is said to be a bird, which is most probably an indication that the shamanistic dancing here in question was some kind of feather dance in which the shaman was ritually ornamented with a feathered headdress."

The *Shen yi jing* 神異經 "Classic of Divine Wonders" records a later variation of Hundun mythology. It describes him as a divine dog who lived on Mt. Kunlun, the mythical mountain at the center of the world.

> It has eyes but can't see, walks without moving; and has two ears but can't hear. It has the knowledge of a man yet its belly is without the five internal organs and, although having a rectum, it doesn't evacuate food. It punches virtuous men and stays with the non-virtuous. It is called. Hun-tun.

Quoting the Zuozhuan, Hun-tun was Meng-shih's untalented son. He always gnaws his tail, going round and round. Everyone ridiculed him. (tr. Girardot 1983:188)

A poem in the Tang Dynasty collection Hanshan refers to the *Zhuangzi* myth and reminisces about *Hundun*.

> How pleasant were our bodies in the days of Chaos, Needing neither to eat or piss! Who came along with his drill And bored us full of these nine holes? Morning after morning we must dress and eat; Year after year, fret over taxes. A thousand of us scrambling for a penny, We knock our heads together and yell for dear life. (78, tr. Watson 1970:77)

Note the addition of two holes (anus and penis) to the original seven (eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth).

Interpretations

Hundun myths have a complex history, with many variations on the "primordial chaos" theme and associations with other legends.

The sociologist and historian Wolfram Eberhard analyzed the range of various *hundun* myths in his book (1968:438-446) on local cultures in South and East China. He treated it as a World egg mythic "chain" from the southern Liao culture, which originated in the Sichuan and Hubei region.

1. *Hundun* creation myths involving humanity being born from a "thunder-egg" or lump of flesh, the son of an emperor, the Thunder god represented as a dog with bat wings, localized with the Miao people and Thai people.
2. *The animal Lei* (the rare character combines the "dog radical" 犭 with a *lei* 雷 "thunder" phonetic) "is a creature like a lump, without head, eyes, hands, or feet. At midnight it produces noises like thunder." (1968:440)
3. *The hundun dumplings*, etymologically connected with "round", "unorganized; chaotic", and perhaps the "round mountain" Kunlun.
4. *The world-system huntian* 渾天 in ancient Chinese astronomy conceptualized the universe as a round egg and the earth as a yolk swimming within it.
5. *The sack and the shooting of the god* connects sack-like descriptions of *hundun*, perhaps with "sack" denoting "testicles", legends about Shang Dynasty king Wu Yi who lost a game of chess with the god Heaven and suspended a sack filled with blood and shot arrows at it, and later traditions of shooting at human dolls.
6. *Pangu* 盤古 is the mythological creator of the universe, also supposedly shaped like a sack, connected with dog mythologies, and who grew into a giant in order to separate Heaven and Earth.
7. *Heaven and earth as marital partners* within the world-egg refers to the theme of Sky father and Earth Mother goddess.
8. *Zhongli* 重黎 or 融黎 is identified with Zhu Rong 祝融 "god of fire", which is a mythology from the southern state Chu, with variations appearing as two gods Zhong and Li.
9. *Zhongli* 重黎 clan, which has variant writings, originated in the Ba (state), near present-day Anhui.
10. *The brother-sister marriage* is a complex of myths explaining the origins or mankind (or certain families), and their first child is usually a lump of flesh, which falls into pieces and populates the world. In later mythology, the brother Fu Xi and sister Nüwa, who lived on Mt. Kunlun, exemplify this marriage.

Norman J. Girardot, professor of Chinese religion at Lehigh University, has written articles and a definitive book on *hundun*. He summarizes this mythology as follows.

1. The *hun-tun* theme in early Taoism represents an ensemble of mythic elements coming from different cultural and religious situations.
2. The symbolic coherence of the *hun-tun* theme in the Taoist texts basically reflects a creative reworking of a limited set of interrelated mythological typologies: especially the cosmic egg-gourd, the animal ancestor-cosmic giant, and primordial couple mythologies. The last two of these typologies are especially, although not exclusively, linked to what may be called the deluge cycle of mythology found primarily in southern local cultures.

3. While there may also be a cultural connection between the southern deluge cycle and the cosmogonic scenario of the cosmic egg (i.e., via the "thunder-egg," "origin of ancestors [culture hero] from egg or gourd," and "origin of agriculture and mankind from gourd" myths), the fundamental linkage for all these typologies is the early Taoist, innovative perception of a shared symbolic intention that accounts for, and supports, a particular cosmogonic, metaphysical, and mystical vision of creation and life. (1983:209)

Interpretations of *Hundun* have expanded from "primordial chaos" into other realms. For instance, it is a keyword in *Neidan* "Chinese internal alchemy". Robinet (2007:525) explains, "Alchemists begin their work by "opening" or "boring" *hundun*; in other words, they begin from the Origin, infusing its transcendent element of precosmic light into the cosmos in order to reshape it."

In popular culture

The *Kung Fu Panda: Legends of Awesomeness* television series features a rhinoceros villain named Hundun. A character by the same name is also featured in *The Legend of Korra video game as the primary antagonist.*

See also

- Tao
- Hongjun Laozu
- Chaos (cosmogony) - bearing the similar name (both meaning "chaos" in Modern English) and appearing in the mythological primordial era

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External links

- Chaos: A Thematic Continuity between Early Taoism and Taoist Inner Alchemy (http://www.bedegriffiths.com/dialogue/ciew_crowe.htm), Paul Crowe
- In a Calabash, A Chinese Myth of Origins (http://www.fengshuigate.com/calabash/introduction.html), Stephen Field

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Reflections Concerning Art, Nature, and the Affairs of Humankind (also some gardening anecdotes)

Hundun

February 7, 2011 in China, Opinion, Uncategorized | Tags: bland, chaos, Chinese, chiseled, destroyed, faceless, Hundun, muddled, muddleheaded, myth, shrimp dumpling, six legs, stupid god, without orifices, 混沌

Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism are venerable faiths, but Chinese culture is so ancient that there are much older religious beliefs which are still part of the social framework. Some of these gods and legends have become part of the newer religions of East Asia (particularly of Taoism, with its mystic animist bent); other figures endure in popular culture and folklore—like Chang'e, goddess of the moon; and some of the truly old legends have become hopelessly confused. Such a figure is Hundun, an ancient featureless chaos god, whose blandness and confused nature have made his name a synonym for a hopeless muddle.



There are several conflicting myths about Hundun, but the most ancient is the most powerful. It serves as a troubling warning to do-gooders everywhere. The story was told in the Zhuangzi, a collection of writings made around 370 BC during the tumultuous warring states period. The Oxford handbook of Chinese mythology describes how the story "portrays Hundun as the god of the central region who has not a single aperture. Shu (literally meaning 'fast') was god of the south sea while Hu ('swift') was the god of the north sea. They often met each other at the central region reigned by Hundun. Hundun treated them very well so Shu and Hu hoped to pay a debt of gratitude to him." The two gods decided that a being who did not have any orifices would certainly want a mouth for eating and ears with which to hear and nose for breathing and so forth. The gods surprised their quiet friend by chiseling a new orifice for him every day for a week. Unfortunately on the seventh day Hundun died from the massive trauma. It's a gory and effective version of the "physician, do no harm" injunction!

However, this is not the only story about the being: other versions of Hundun, just as confusing and disturbing, have sprung up over the years. In another myth Hundun was a sort of earless, eyeless beardog with a mouth but

without internal organs. This disquieting entity would run up against the virtuous and slam against them– however it was fawning towards the wicked. Yet another story describes Hundun as a yellow bag with six vermilion feet and four cinnabar wings. This red-yellow being (again lacking a head and face) knew how to dance and sing, but seems to have few other characteristics.



The real nature of the original deity behind Hundun is thus rather obscure. What is obvious from the similarities of all three versions is that Hundun was a faceless deity unguided by conventional (or even recognizable) sensory input. Today in China “hundun” refers to something or someone which is muddleheaded (or to a sort of shrimp dumpling/wonton). I find the legend compelling because it relates to the types of life I write about. Humankind often thinks of mollusks as beings devoid of higher senses or of neural functions (neither characterization is always correct at all). The idea that someone (or something) which perceives differently from us lacks perception is commonplace but often inaccurate. Hu and Wu’s accidental murder of Hundun is also disturbing. It seems like an excellent metaphor for destroying something before understanding it (which humans excel at).



3 comments

Comments feed for this article

February 7, 2011 at 9:11 PM
AJ

Ya gotta read The Muddleheaded Wombat by Ruth Park! The Hundun looks like a wombat…..(another mystery solved)

Reply

February 8, 2011 at 5:33 PM
Hieronymo

Good grief! I hadn't noticed but now that you point it out, I am extremely struck by the similarities (and the coincidence of Park's title). I wasn't trying to denigrate wombats or to offend mythical Chinese entities.

Reply

February 9, 2011 at 1:49 AM
AJ

Aww….don't sweat it. I have it on good authority that both wombats and mythical Chinese entities have a sense of humour.

Reply

LEAVE A REPLY

Enter your comment here...

Hungry Ghost (Preta) in Burma

Tags: Buddhism , Burma , ghost , Hungry Ghost , Karma , Myanmar , Preta Nationality: Burmese Primary Language: English Other language(s): Burmese Age: 17 Occupation: Student Residence: Burma Performance Date: 10 November 2011 Print This Post

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My room mate, ThawZin, is from Burma. He is a Buddhist, and is very religious. This is the story he told me from his country.

ThawZin: *"First, some background info! In Buddhism we have different classes for spirituality. There are the demigods at the top, followed by humans, animals, hungry ghosts, then devils. Hungry ghosts are what we call 'preta' (pronounced pale-tar). Pretas are people, who, when they were alive, were greedy and malicious. Their death is usually caused by a greedy act they brought upon themselves. You know… pretas are actually pitied by humans, because they have to face suffering, but they deserve it. It's karma. They are invisible, but they can scare mortals. They like eating the gooey shit coming from meat and other things, haha! That is why, every time I go to the market with my mom, we always have to spit on the floor, so that they won't follow us. Their appearance: they have big bellies, and small heads. The big bellies symbolize how greedy they are, you know… They want so much, but the little head, little face, little mouth, symbolize that they can't get anything, can't get shit, you know? Haha!*

Anyway so the story… my mother told me this before. In Burma there's this guy. He was fucking greedy during his life time. One day he was really hungry. He loved eating intestines, so he went to his wife and said, 'Where the fuck is my food?!" But the wife didn't have anything prepared. He was so angry, so he went to the barn and, you know, he cut the tongues of the cows there while they were still alive! I mean the cows were still alive, and he just cut them, and so they were bleeding and shit. The cows were like… mooing the whole night, haha! And they died a slow, painful death. He went to his wife, threw the cow tongues down at the table and told her to cook them for him. So the wife did. As he was eating the cow tongues, suddenly his own tongue started to dissolve. You know, it dissolved all the way to his insides. But karma did not kill him yet, it made him suffer. The cow tongue just dissolved his insides for days, until he died. He died just like the cows… a slow, painful death. When he died, that is when he became a preta. Well, he was reborn as a preta."

Me: "Where in Burma was this? I mean, is there a specific place where he haunts?"

ThawZin: *"Oh yes! It is in the old first kingdom of Burma, in Bagan.*

Me: "Do people avoid that place?"

ThawZin: *"Oh not at all! Actually you know, when he died, his preta was located under the ground. And then one day farmers in Bagan found that one part of… you know, the ground, started becoming fleshy. And that's when they figured out that there was a preta there. They don't avoid it. They constantly plow over the land, again and again. The greedy guy has to suffer again and again, getting plowed, but they can't do anything about him. It's karma, man. He deserves what came to him, and he has to stay there until he has repaid his debt, his bad karma."*

ThawZin's story shows a lot about the Burmese culture, especially about the strength of the people's belief in Buddhism. For one, the whole idea of a preta ghost is based on Buddhist beliefs in

spiritual hierarchy and rebirth. As well, he says that even though people pity these pretas, when the farmers found out that there was a preta under the ground, they still plowed over him, again and again, even if it made the preta suffer, because they believed in the Buddhist concept of karma: that people deserve what is coming to them, good or bad. In many ways, his story also comes as a story of morality, particularly for the idea that greed and blind rage are unwanted negatives that will get you in trouble, and will follow you even after you die, in your rebirth, or the afterlife.

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Hungry Ghosts: The Diet of the Dead among the Grigori, Preta, Yidak, Gaki, and Egui

esoterx.com

~ If Monsters Don't Exist, Why Are They Out To Get Me?



EsoterX

Hungry Ghosts: The Diet of the Dead among the Grigori, Preta, Yidak, Gaki, and Egui

20*Wednesday*Mar 2013

John Steinbeck once observed, “Where does discontent start? You are warm enough, but you shiver. You are fed, yet hunger gnaws you. You have been loved, but your yearning wanders in new fields. And to prod all these there’s time, the Bastard Time.” Stretch that time to eternity, and you may run into one of the many phantasmal foragers that are collectively known as “hungry ghosts”. If you are foolish enough to live a mortal life of insatiable greed your recompense, in several mythologies, appears to be condemnation to wander the earth for all time, insanely hungry, but unable to eat, and desperately thirsty, but unable to drink. By this logic, Wall Street should look like a scene from the Walking Dead, but unfortunately the Abrahamic Western deity is a cruel, desert God and all indications are that there is very little justice in the universe. And it’s kind of an obvious punishment. I like to credit supreme beings with a little more originality, or at least a supernaturally twisted sense of humor (“Yeah, so I told him to build a boat and collect two of every living creature. Can you believe he took me seriously?) This does not change the fact that the notion of “hungry ghosts” is well-represented cross-culturally. Perhaps one day they will make a comeback, and foreknowledge is forewarning. Smart to be prepared for any eventuality, up to and including inundation with ravenous spirits.

Like a lot of good horror, traces of our hungry ghosts can be found in biblical Apocrypha, particularly the psuedepigraphical and apocalyptic Book of Enoch (1 Enoch) and the Slavonic Enoch (2 Enoch or “The Secrets of Enoch”), called Slavonic as the full text was only found preserved in Old Church Slavonic (the first literary Slavic language), with a few Coptic fragments identified as late in the game as 2009 A.D. The bulk of the Book of Enoch itself is generally attributed to Jewish sectarians in the 1st Century B.C. The Slavonic Enoch is regarded as a 1st Century A.D. Christian work. Interestingly, the portion of 1 Enoch that we are most interested in (“The Book of Watchers”) is thought to date to roughly 300 B.C, later redacted along with five other books into what we now know as the Book of Enoch. Basically, older than dirt. Now, hungry ghosts don’t figure all that prominently, but the Book of Watchers purports to describe the fall of the angels that fathered the Nephilim (dad’s an angel, mom’s a human), referred to as giants inhabiting Canaan in Numbers 13:33. So, we all know what happened to the divine baby daddy’s – cast down into the eternal gloom of Tartarus. Another bit of biblical Apocrypha (canonical for Ethiopian Jews and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church), The Book of Jubilees, probably written somewhere 150 B.C., suggest that God sent the Flood largely to wipe out the Nephilim, but strangely decided to keep the disembodied spirits of 10 percent of the nasty giants around to use for tempting humanity. How humane. At any rate, the Book of Enoch explains their fate.

But you from the beginning were made spiritual, possessing a life which is eternal, and not subject to death for ever. Therefore I made not wives for you, because, being spiritual, your dwelling is in heaven. Now the giants, who have been born of spirit and of flesh, shall be called upon earth evil spirits, and on earth shall be their habitation. Evil spirits shall proceed from their flesh, because they were created from above; from the holy Watchers was their beginning and primary foundation. Evil spirits shall they be upon earth, and the spirits of the wicked shall they be called. The habitation of the spirits of heaven shall be in heaven; but upon earth shall be the habitation of terrestrial spirits, who are born on earth. The spirits of the giants shall be like clouds, which shall oppress, corrupt, fall, contend, and bruise upon earth. They shall cause lamentation. No food shall they eat; and they shall be thirsty; they shall be concealed, and shall not rise up against the sons of men, and against women; for they come forth during the days of slaughter and destruction. And as to the death of the giants, wheresoever their spirits depart from their bodies, let their flesh, that which is perishable, be without judgment. Thus shall they perish, until the day of the great consummation of the great world. A destruction shall take place of the Watchers and the impious (1 Enoch, XV – XVI).

Not nice. The Nephilim (equated with the Grigori in 2 Enoch, Grigori being a direct Slavonic transcription of the Greek word “egrḗgoroi”, meaning “watchful”, which itself was translated from the Aramaic “iyr” or “to watch”) who were suffered to survive the flood, were literally “disembodied” and condemned to hang around on earth for an eternity of hunger and thirst. It’s not like they asked to be born, so all things considered this seems a tad harsh, but that’s those stern monotheistic father gods for you. Clean your room or I’ll smite you, suck out your soul, and send you on a starving walkabout for the rest of existence. Spare the rod you nut, for heaven’s sake. Much as it would amuse me to lay this kind of theological monstrosity at the doorstep of monotheism, we have ample examples of hungry ghosts from a variety of traditions. Take for example, the Hindu *preta* (a Sanskrit term meaning “departed, deceased, a dead person”). Classical Sanskrit used this term to refer to any ghost, but especially in reference to one of our hungry phantom friends and versions are extant in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Sikhism, and Jainism, and in most incarnations they are basically walking corpses with disturbingly specific needs.

First some basic Hinduism. Five elements constitute the universe: Air, Water, Fire, Earth, and Dark Matter (there are other karmically determined elements, but these are the essentials). Preta are held to be bodies made of only Air and Dark Matter (either due to an unnatural death or not having the appropriate funerary rituals – which incidentally, are thought of us “destroying” all remnants of the physical impression on the world), and because they are missing the other three elements representing the physical world, no intake of food or drink is possible for them. Sucks to be a preta, which is why appropriate treatment of the dead is way important in Hinduism. The *Garuda Purana*, a Hindu text dating to about 500 B.C. in the form of a dialog between Vishnu and the King of Birds (Garuda), deals with a lot of afterlife issues and instructions on appropriate treatment of the dead, and includes discussion of the preta.

The forty-eight Sraddhas destroy the condition of the ghost-life. He for whom this series is performed becomes a member of the assembly of the forefathers. The three sixteens should be performed so that the departed may join the assembly of the forefathers; if deprived of Sraddhas the ghost remains as preta always. If the performance of the three sixteens of Sraddhas is not carried out, either by himself or another, then he certainly does not join them (Garuda Purana, Chapter XII, lines 67-69 trans. Naunidhirāma).

Now, I’m a big fan of karmic retribution, but even I have to admit that the typically mellow Buddhists brought their mythological horror “A-Game” when they tackled the notion of the hungry ghost. Buddhism inherited much of its mythology from Hinduism. Whereas Hinduism largely attributed the existence of the preta to failure to properly observe funeral rites, Buddhism more explicitly linked the preta to excessive possessiveness or desire in a previous life, essentially translating the preta into one of the six possible states of rebirth, relegating unfortunate, ethically-challenged people to “The Realm of the Hungry Ghosts” represented in the Dharmic Wheel. The Petavatthu (“Stories of Ghosts”) is a Theravada Buddhist scripture in verse, and discusses the life of the preta as an entire realm of existence, wholly dependent on ours for sustenance.

They stand outside our dwellings, at our windows, at the corners of our streets; they stand at our doors, revisiting their old homes. When abundant food and drink is set before them, by reason of the past sins of these departed ones, their friends on earth remember them not. Yet do such of their kinsmen as are merciful bestow upon them at due seasons food and drink, pure, sweet and suitable. Let this be done for your departed friends, let them be satisfied. Then, gathering together here, the assembled spirits of out kinsmen rejoice greatly in a plentiful repast. “Long,” they say, “may our kinsmen live through whom we have received these things: to us offerings are made and the givers are not without reward” for in the land of the dead there is no husbandry, no keeping of flocks, no commerce ad with us, no trafficking for gold: the departed live in that world by what they receive in this. As water fallen upon a height descends into the valley, so surely do alms bestowed by men benefit the dead. As the brimming rivers fill the ocean, so do alms bestowed by men benefit the dead. Let a man consider thus—” Such a one gave me this gift, such a one wrought me this good deed; they were my kinsmen, my friends, my associates.” Then let him give alms to the dead, mindful of past benefits. For weeping and sorrow and all manner of lamentation are of no avail, if their relatives stand thus sorrowing it benefits not the dead. But this charity bestowed by you, well secured in the priesthood, if it long bless the dead, then does it benefit them indeed. And the fulfillment of this duty to relatives to the dead is a great service rendered, to the priests a great strength given, by you no small merit acquired (Petavatthu, Khuddaka pátha XII-XIII, trans. R.C. Childers)

Tibetan Buddhism calls it a "yidak" and adds a little more corporeal reality to its descendant of the Hindu preta, assigning it very specific anatomical characteristics, which ultimately result in its unquenchable thirst and insatiable hunger. We have an adequately graphic account related to us by Jesuit missionary to Tibet, Father Ippolito Desideri.

By Yidak they mean a certain kind of living being that has a very small and narrow mouth exactly like the eye of a needle, and a neck that is similarly narrow and constricted. Their eyes emit noxious and fiery exhalations that dry everything up, and their stomachs are huge and capacious…Their principal torments are a perpetual and extreme hunger and painful thirst. Their skin and flesh is dry and scorched like a firebrand half burned and quenched, their hair is bristly, their mouths extremely dry, and their tongues are like those of exhausted and thirsty dogs. To relieve their thirst they run anxiously and panting towards springs and pools, but as soon as they reach the longed-for water and eagerly stretch forth their necks and are about to drink, they are thwarted, and the torment of their thirst grows greater than ever…To relieve their hunger they run around from place to place in search of something to eat, suffering the intolerable pain of total exhaustion and finding nothing; or if they do find something, it is either instantly consumed by sudden flames or changed into the most revolting and stinking filth so that it is totally inedible. Even should they finally manage to swallow a little something, it cannot allay the great hunger and insatiable appetite of their huge bellies, and instead exacerbates their torment all the more, increasing beyond measure the inconsolable and incurable pain…Finally, to sum this all up in a few words, the state of such unhappy living beings is very similar to that of Hell. Such a birth and the enormous sufferings that accompany it are primarily the penalty and punishment for avarice" (Desideri, 2010, p349-250)

Oh Japan. When we want to get truly wacky with our folk freaks, we can always turn to you. Japanese strains of Buddhism elaborated thirty-six different classes of preta (which were called "Gaki"), ascribing specific desires for specific sins. A few examples of Gaki: the shikko-gaki (defile a grave, hunger for dead flesh), the kwaku-shin-gaki (allowed the poor to freeze, bodies continually scorched by fire with fuel they themselves are forced to collect), the gakimushi (mindless killers, condemned to be giant insects ripping up everything in their path until slaughtered by angry villagers), the jiki-kwa (arsonists, eternally forced to seek out and eat fire), and the doku-gaki (poisoners, forced to forever eat poison), to name just a few. They get pretty specific about the sins committed. For instance, if out of greed you sell bad incense, you are eternally damned to insatiable hunger for the smoke of incense.

Although the power of making visible the forms of the dead has been claimed for one sort of incense only, the burning of any kind of incense is supposed to summon viewless spirits in multitude. These come to devour the smoke. They are called Jiki-ko-ki, or "incense-eating goblins;" and they belong to the fourteenth of the thirty-six classes of Gaki (pretas) recognized by Japanese Buddhism. They are the ghosts of men who anciently, for the sake of gain, made or sold bad incense; and by the evil karma of that action they now find themselves in the state of hunger-suffering spirits, and compelled to seek their only food in the smoke of incense (Hearn, 1906, p54-55).

Chinese Buddhists offer their own version of preta, called the "egui", exemplified by the story of Mu-lien and his mother in the *Kuei wen mu-lien ching* ("The Sutra on the Ghosts Questioning Mu-lien"). The hungry ghost found fertile ground among Chinese Buddhists, as it meshed well with existing folk concepts in traditional Confucian ancestor worship, this despite fierce resistance to Buddhism from Confucians. The result was an interesting holiday called "The Hungry Ghost Festival" (15th Day of the Seventh Lunar month in the Chinese Calendar), when restless spirits are released from the lower realms to roam the earth, and the living can ameliorate the suffering of the hungry dead by offerings of food and gifts, still celebrated to this day.

As soon as he [Buddha] arrives, the magic radiance that shines from the down between his eyebrows dissolves Hell. The Tree of Swords and the Forest of Knives turn to dust, and all the demon-gaolers fall on their knees, and do homage to Buddha. The damned are all transferred to Heaven. Not, however, Lady Leek Stem; she becomes a Preta, a Hungry Ghost. If in the distance she hears the sound of water, by the time she gets near it has turned into a river of revolting pus. Food the moment it touches her lips turns into fire. She implores Mu-lien to take his begging-bowl and collect some rice for her, thinking apparently that rice given as alms to a monk will not be subject to the laws of the Preta world. And he must be quick about it, she says, for she is in desperate need of nourishment. Mu-lien goes off to the city of Rajagriha and begs from a man of substance, who is at first shocked at a monk begging

at so late an hour in the day. 'Monk,' he says, 'you must already have had your early meal. The time for eating is over. What are you going to do with this rice?' Mu-lien explains, and the man of substance tells his servants to bring rice immediately. Mu-lien hurries back to his mother and begins to feed her 'with a golden spoon'. But all the torments of Hell have not cured her of her inveterate covetousness and greed. She is terrified that the other Hungry Ghosts will snatch away the food. 'The monk who has come', she says to them, 'is my son. It is for me that he has brought this rice from the world of men. Just calm yourselves, and perhaps when I am feeling better I will do something for you. …" Looking round anxiously in every direction she protected the bowl with her left hand, while with her right she rolled the rice into balls. But before it entered her mouth, it turned into fire. She then implored him to get water to put the fire out, and he took her to the great river to the south of Rajagriha. When the people of the common world see this river, it is as pure, clear water that they see it. When gods see this river, it is as a stream of crystal that they see it. When fish see this river, to them it is a mountain brook. But when Lady Leek Stem saw it, to her it was a river of foul pus. Mu-lien was obliged to go back once more to Buddha who explained that not till the Avalambana Festival had been celebrated could his mother eat (Waley, 1960, p231-232).

Let's face it. It sucks to be a ghost. All that haunting and insubstantiality has to wear you down after a while. Maybe you get a little jealous of the living, rattle a few chains, even go poltergeist in a ghostly tantrum. Boring, yes, but at least you are not consumed by unquenchable thirst and insatiable appetite, often for the most unsavory of items (decayed flesh, fire, human excrement, etc.). The theological lesson is obviously, "don't be greedy, you might get stuck that way". There's a reason that hunger and thirst make up the base of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. When they are not satisfied, we are fairly unpleasant creature. Compound that across eternity. Doesn't make for a happy afterlife. Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, who spent a fair share of time in Soviet Gulags, acquiring expertise in hunger observed, "The belly is an ungrateful wretch, it never remembers past favors, it always wants more tomorrow." And all he wanted was some more bread.

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thoughts on "Hungry Ghosts: The Diet of the Dead among the Grigori, Preta, Yidak, Gaki, and Egui"

1. thesevenminds*said:*

May 1, 2013 at 5:43 pm

Reblogged this on The Seven Minds.

2. thesevenminds*said:*

May 1, 2013 at 6:18 pm

Great article. It was a great read before bedtime! The good news is that I no longer feel like a preta ghost hungry for knowledge. My little suffering is just not that big of a deal. Namaste.

- EsoterX*said:*

May 1, 2013 at 6:24 pm

Namaste. Dhanyavaad. I like it when monsters are uplifting.

3. ziraffe*said:*

September 18, 2013 at 4:02 pm

Good stuff. By the advice of Thich Nhat Hahn: Mindful living quells the hungry ghost which has emerged in our age of consumerism.

Blog at WordPress.com.

Shanghai mall opens 'husband nursery' where guys can kill time while their wives shop til they drop

shanghaiist.com

http://shanghaiist.com/2016/11/07/husband_nursery.php

by Alex Linder in News on Nov 7, 2016 6:55 pm



husband_nursery.jpg

In order to create a more pleasant shopping experience for both sexes, a Shanghai mall has recently opened an innovative new facility -- the "husband nursery."

The magical room is located on the third floor of the new Vanke Mall in Qibao. There are magazines, newspapers, a TV and at least four chairs including one massage chair where hubbies can relax and refrain from shopping.

Only one problem, why would you ever want to leave?



husband_nurseryfront.jpg

Despite the obvious benefits, netizens aren't completely sold on the idea.

"In two days, that room will be occupied by uncles and aunties," commented one web user.

"If there's free wifi and mahjohng inside, wives will be spending more time in there than their husbands," wrote another.



husband_nursery2.jpg

"They should open a prostitution room instead," suggested another.

"What a brilliant mall, for a man, going shopping with the wife is worse than work," commented one tired spouse.

Btw, they also apparently have a tree house!

[Images via Tencent / ChinaNews]

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husband_nursery4.jpg



husband_nursery3.jpg



husband_nursery5.jpg



husband_nursery6.jpg

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The slum in Millionaire's Row

12:14 EST, 20 October 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com
MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

The slum in Millionaire's Row: Landlord is fined £162,000 after packing 18 migrant tenants into multi-million pound four-bed flat in listed building opposite London's Hyde Park

- **Abbas Rasul, 64, who owned the London flat charged an average of £800 a month in rent from each tenant, earning him nearly £15,000 a month**
- **They were squeezed into the converted four-bedroom flat in the mansion**
- **House is next door to the Dutch embassy and near Churchill's £32m home**

By Anthony Joseph for MailOnline

A slum landlord has been fined £162,000 after 18 people were found living in a multi-million pound four-bedroom flat opposite Hyde Park.

Abbas Rasul, 64, who owned the flat in Kensington, London, charged an average of £800 a month in rent from each tenant, earning him nearly £15,000 a month.

They were all squeezed into the converted four-bedroom flat in the mansion in Hyde Park Gate where flats can sell for more than £5million.

The house in Kensington is next door to the Dutch embassy and near the £23m house where Sir Winston Churchill died in 1965.



Abbas Rasul, 64, who owned the flat in Kensington, London, charged an average of £800 a month in rent from each tenant, earning him nearly £15,000 a month

They were all squeezed into the converted four-bedroom flat in the mansion in Hyde Park Gate where flats can sell for more than £5million

- SHARE PICTURE

The house in Kensington is next door to the Dutch embassy and near the £23m house where Sir Winston Churchill died in 1965





Many of the tenants living there were believed to be migrant workers who work at some of the capital's luxury hotels and the flat's problems only came to light after one complained about conditions.

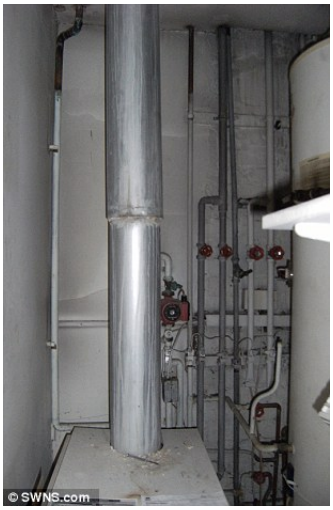
Council officers found it had been subdivided into small units using flimsy plasterboard partitions and comprised of 14 rooms.

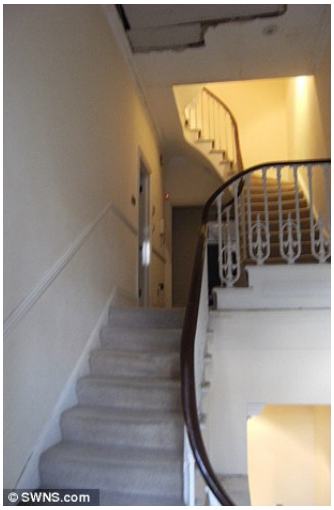
Pictures of the property show parts of the ceiling collapsed, a washing machine and dryer shoved into the bathroom and other white goods in the hallway.

Hammersmith Magistrates Court heard there were no fire doors, smoke detectors or alarms in the 'unsafe' property, some rooms lacked basic lighting and there was only one kitchen.

The flat was also said to be a serious fire hazard, with a cracked flue on its unserviced gas boiler.

There were also no fire doors, smoke detectors or alarms in the overcrowded flat which had one kitchen shared by all the tenants.





Many of the tenants living there were believed to be migrant workers who work at some of the capital's luxury hotels and the flat's problems only came to light after one complained about conditions



Council officers found it had been subdivided into small units using flimsy plasterboard partitions and comprised of 14 rooms

An order by environmental health officers requested all the tenants to leave within 28 days.

The Fire Service inspected the building and would only allow tenants to remain in the flat if a 24 hour on site manager was provided by the landlord.

Rasul and his companies, Grosvenor Property Investments Ltd and London Victoria Estates Ltd, were found guilty of failing to license a house in multiple occupation earlier this month.

They were also found to be in breach of 22 housing regulations.

Rasul of The Quadrangle, Cambridge Square in Paddington, west London, and his companies were fined a total of £162,000 and ordered to pay £3,498 in costs.

In sentencing the magistrates said there had been a 'lack of compliance over considerable amount of time and an attempt to obstruct officers in their investigations.'

An order by environmental health officers requested all the tenants to leave within 28 days

The Fire Service inspected the building and would only allow tenants to remain in the flat if a 24 hour on site manager was provided by the landlord

The council say it is believed the building has now been renovated. Abbas did not appear in court but was found guilty of the offences in his absence









They added: 'There is evidence of substantial disregard of their obligation to protect the tenants whilst they are living at the property.'

Deputy leader of Kensington and Chelsea council, Rock Feilding-Mellen, said: 'This type of landlord has no place anywhere, and in Kensington and Chelsea we will do our utmost to crack down on them.

'Tenants were living in crowded conditions created by illegal and unsafe alterations.'

Neighbour Melanie Taylor said: 'The comings and goings were ridiculous. There were so many people arriving and leaving with suitcases - the landlord was clearly cramming them in and it amounted to years of hell for us.

'The building used to be split into family apartments, but that all changed. This is an embassy district and he was running a downmarket hostel. We were all very angry about it.'

The council say it is believed the building has now been renovated.

Abbas did not appear in court but was found guilty of the offences in his absence.

Comments (

boosters, birmingham, United Kingdom, about 10 hours ago

There have been many cases where more people have lived in smaller property's.

Andyjmnffc, Nottingham, about 10 hours ago

Disgusting but am I surprised?

brenda b, Toronto, Canada, about 11 hours ago

Of course, when it comes to slumlords it basically comes down to GREED or COST everyone is aware of that.

jusswondering, Bilericay, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

Marmalade sky - agreed. I've lived in what appeard to be far worse 'furnished flats'.

cov72, coventry, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

Why bother with the hassle. make 3 flats and sell for £15 million. The interest off that would be better with the right investment.

Littletrevean, St. Keverne, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

Confiscate the property.

Clare, The world that was, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

'This is an embassy district. We are all very annoyed about it.' yes love well this goes on all over. Stupid person. Welcome to the real world.

Katy-23, London, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

Automatic one year jail sentence.

Hemingway 5952, Newcadtle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

The elite are now having this on their doorstep.

venture101, Gateshead, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

Where the hell were migrants getting the money from to afford to pay £800 in rent?

Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd

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Face-biting attacker: 'I ate something bad ... humans'

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressNovember 1, 2016



FILE - This Oct. 3, 2016, file photo, provided by the Martin County Sheriff's Office, shows Austin Harrouff. Public records released Monday, Oct. 31, 2016, show Harrouff, who is accused of killing a couple and chewing on the dead man's face told deputies, "Help me, I ate something bad" and then admitted it was "humans." (Martin County Sheriff's Office via AP, File)

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The Florida college student accused of killing a couple and chewing on the dead man's face told deputies, "Help me, I ate something bad" and then admitted it was "humans" as he spit out a piece of flesh, court documents show.

Austin Harrouff, 19, also begged deputies to kill him after they pulled him off John Stevens' body, according to the records, obtained Monday by the Palm Beach Post (http://pbpo.st/2ej9q8g).

"Shoot me now, I deserve to die," Harrouff said.

Harrouff is charged with second-degree murder in the Aug. 15 attack on Stevens, 59, and his 53-year-old wife, Michelle Mishcon, outside their Tequesta home. Prosecutors say they will ask a grand jury to indict him on first-degree murder charges. That would make him eligible for the death penalty.

Deputies say they found the then-muscular former high school football player and wrestler in his underwear, making animal noises and biting Stevens' face as he pinned his victim's body to the driveway.

The FBI is running tests to determine whether Harrouff was on drugs. Harrouff was hospitalized for almost two months after the attack. His father says his esophagus was burned. Martin County Sheriff William Snyder has said Harrouf may have ingested lawn chemicals found in the couple's garage.

According to the court documents, one deputy ordered Harrouff off Stevens at gunpoint while another used an electric stun gun on him but he wouldn't let go. Snyder has said the deputies didn't shoot Harrouff because they feared hitting Stevens.

Finally, a deputy with a dog arrived and its bites enabled deputies to subdue Harrouff. Mishcon's body was found in the garage.

Less than an hour before the attack, Harrouff was having dinner with his father, sister and a friend at a restaurant about 4 miles from the victims' house when he apparently had words with his father. Surveillance video shows him calmly walking out about 45 minutes before the stabbings, and his family was concerned.

His mother, unaware of the attack, called police to report him missing; she said he had been acting strangely for about a week, claiming to have superpowers and to have been sent here to help people.

The victims lived a short distance from Harrouff's father and were known to sit in their garage with the door open, watching television and chatting with passers-by.

Harrouff's parents issued a statement days after the slayings expressing their condolences to the Stevens family and their apologies to neighbor Jeff Fisher, who was stabbed as he tried to rescue the couple.

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I say "Always Ready." You say "Semper Paratus."

By Timothy Winkle , September 15, 2016

si.edu

Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Our fire engine has a secret message. For a few years now, this hand-pumped engine has been on display on the museum's first floor. For a practical piece of firefighting equipment, it's elaborately decorated—brass fixtures, carved swans, and painted panels on all four sides of its central tower. At the top of that tower, engraved brass plates declare this to be the engine of the venerable Hand in Hand Fire Company of Philadelphia and bear the motto "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." But before it was acquired in the 1880s by veteran volunteer firefighters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and turned into a parade piece, the pumper saw action on the streets of Wilmington, Delaware, starting in 1842. Remove those brass plates and there are other words underneath, the name of the pumper's original owners—Washington Fire Company—and their Latin motto—"Non Sibi Sed Omnibus" (roughly translated "Not for self, but for all.")



A wooden machine with spoked wheels. It has two large handles for pumping opposite of a column with paintings and elaborate decoration like gold molding and painted text



A close-up of the column on the wooden fire truck. It has illustrations, including one of a man holding a child to him. "Hand in hand" is one of the phrases painted on a side of the column.

It's certainly a good phrase that sums up the heroics and sacrifice that are inherent in firefighting, even more so when you consider that these words come down to us from a time when all firefighting in America was performed by volunteers. In the late 18th and early 19th century, in big city neighborhoods and small towns alike, members of the community banded together to protect their fellow citizens, founding fire companies and purchasing equipment such as hand engines and hose. These volunteer companies were the focus of community pride, lauded as the epitome of selfless service and manly republican virtue. The companies reflected their status in their appearance and equipment, from painted hats to elaborate engines, deployed in public parades and fire scenes alike. As a point of emphasis and identity, volunteers selected a motto to summarize their service and the spirit of their particular company. Some of the most interesting choices come from Philadelphia, a city with a long history of organized firefighting, dating back to Benjamin Franklin's establishment of the Union Fire Company in 1736.

Some fire company mottos were as straightforward as they were aspirational. Resolution Hose Company insisted "To Be Useful is Our Wish." Fairmount Fire Company was "Prompt to Action." Other companies shared similar sentiments, with mottos such as "Always Ready" and "When Duty Calls, Tis Ours to Obey."



A bucket made out of cracked leather and painted yellow, with oval illustrations of houses and ships and words such as "No. 1" and "J. Patch 1776"



A brown bucket with a handle and a green circle saying "'79" ringed by a cream band reading "Jon Andrew Social"

Other mottos were pointedly self-referential. "Our Name is Our Motto" stated the Good Will Fire Company. Lafayette Hose Company claimed "Like La Fayette, We Will Assist in Time of Need." Another company chose Pennsylvania's founder as its namesake. The William Penn Hose Company declared "Like Penn, We Will Be Useful to Our Country." Some references have grown obscure with time. "We Honor Him Whose Name We Bear" announced the Ringgold Hose Company. Few Americans of the time would not have known the name Ringgold, but I had to look him up. Samuel Ringgold was a pioneering artillery officer and early casualty in Mexican-American War. Mortally wounded at the Battle of Palo Alto in May 1846, he remained in the field and continued to direct his men. His bravery was an inspiration for the nation—songs were written and towns were named in his honor, as well as a certain Philadelphia hose company less than a year after his death.

Patriotic mottos were commonplace, such as this declaration of the Independence Hose Company that "Our Country is Our Glory." With such lofty sentiments to convey, mottos weren't always pithy. Inspired by their namesake, Washington Hose Company avowed "All Private Duties are Subordinate to Those Which We Owe the Public"—a noble notion, but not exactly bumper sticker material. Others were somewhat convoluted. Diligent Hose Company ran under the motto "The Impulse to Action is the Danger of Our Citizens," a phrasing just tortured enough to warrant a second reading. Mottos also sprang from a common heritage, as with the Assistance Fire Company, whose motto—"Bereit"—reflected its founding by German Lutherans.

Some mottos seem downright obscure. Hand in Hand Fire Company's original motto was "Proximus Ardet Ucalegon." Anyone? Wait, I'll translate it—"Ucalegon's house burns next." Still nothing? The line comes directly from Virgil's *Aeneid*. An elder of the city of Troy, Ucalegon (who name in Greek means "not worried") loses his home to fire when the Achaeans sack the city. A 19th century expression that meant a dangerous or dire situation, for the members of the Hand in Hand Company, it also conveyed their public identity as vital and vigorous citizens of the young republic.

At this time, Americans with even the most nominal education would have a passing familiarity with the Greek and Roman classics. Those with formal schooling would have been fully steeped in Latin and Greek and the authors and orators of antiquity. There was a patriotic element to this classical education. In the minds of its founders, the American experiment consciously harkened back to republics of the past, and republics required educated and virtuous citizens to succeed. Even the simple use of a Latin maxim over its English translation spoke volumes, and connected the past with the promise of the present.



An illustration showing a cluster of figures. Neptune rides some sort of chariot pulled by four horse, with sea nymphs surrounding him and a cupid flying in the air. The scene is framed by pink ribbons saying "Neptune Hose Co. Instituted August 6, 1805 and banners reading "To save out fellows we hazard ourselves"

Some of the volunteer fire companies in antebellum Philadelphia seemed to be in a competition to see who could come up with the most learned motto. Perseverance Hose Company kept it simple, choosing "Perseverantia Omnia Vincit" ("Perseverance conquers all things"). Likewise, Fame Hose Company went with "Fama Extenditur Factis" ("Fame spreads our deeds").

The members of the Phoenix Hose Company doubled up on their classical allusions, choosing the fiery mythological bird as their symbol and "Surgo Lucidius" ("I arise in radiance") as their motto. Jumping forward to the 13th century, Hope Hose Company went relatively modern, referencing Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* and declaring "Omnia Actus Specificatur ab Objecto" ("Every act is specified by its object").

Perhaps the Humane Fire Company achieved the ultimate classical motto in its mashup of Greek and Latin. Not content with just the Aristotelian pronouncement "Ou Gnosis Alla Praxis" ("Not knowledge but action"), the members of Humane presented a further challenge to their fellow citizens by adding the Latin aphorism, "Spectemur Agendo" ("Judge us by our actions").

The mottos of 19th century fire companies spoke volumes about their standing in their communities, the aspirations of their members, and their identity as Americans. But at their core, these mottos were a promise to protect and serve. With this in mind, my favorite motto might be the most honest. It comes from the smallest fire engine in our collection, a little two-person hand tub that would have struggled to extinguish all but the smallest fires. Its motto? "We'll Try."



A red, wooden wheelbarrow-like wheeled machine with long handles to be used as pumps

Tim Winkle is a curator and deputy chair in the Division of Home and Community Life. Explore the development and evolution of American firefighting in the upcoming display Always Ready: Fighting Fire in the 19th Century. *It opens September 16, 2016.*

Constitution Avenue, NW Between 12th and 14th Streets Washington, D.C.

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DOUBTFUL NEWS

Can you really believe this stuff?

Doubtful News

Igloolik mystery sound sounds mysterious, but the story leaves us cold

November 3, 2016

Stories about strange sounds are always suspicious. This recent news about a very northern mystery noise is no exception. In this piece from *CBC* news (Canada) – Mysterious 'ping' sound from sea floor baffles Igloolik – I found a number of assumptions, guesses, and no good data to support the allegations that there is a strange noise causing animals to leave the area. As of this writing, I see many news orgs repeating the headlines without actually considering the few facts.

Instead of doing what those hype-type "news" sites do and enhance the mystery, let's break this one down a bit more carefully to see if there is a mystery at all. First, as I always insist, read the story for yourself. It opens in a new browser window. I'll wait…



igloolik

OK, so you have the gist of the story. Some people in a Nunuvut village (territory in the Canadian Arctic) say they hear a ping (or hum or beep) that they believe is not normal. This is concerning to them and they think it has resulted in wildlife disturbance. Various "theories" have sprung up that suggest something nefarious is at work.

The sounds are said to be a ping, beep or hum heard in the Fury and Hecla Strait northwest of the village. The inconsistent descriptions are a clue that perhaps people are not all describing the same thing but several things to which they are attributing a general name and certain cause. Also suspicious is that this sound hasn't been recorded. There are instruments readily available that can record underwater sounds. It's not mentioned anywhere that this has been done. So we have no solid evidence that any sound is actually occurring at all, just anecdotes.

> Boaters aboard a private yacht passing through the area also say they heard the mysterious sound, and described it during an appearance on a community radio show upon their arrival in Igloolik. A number of people called in to say they'd also heard it.

Unconfirmed anecdotes. Unfortunately, we have to be aware that people will perceive what they are suggested to perceive. This could be a major cause for the entire strange sounds phenomena that began in 2011. People started listening and attributing every noise to a mysterious cause. Clearly, some of these sounds have very mundane causes. But it's often difficult to figure out just what those causes are – the observer does not have enough information.

The Canadian military has conducted aerial surveillance. They found no anomalies, but they did find some walruses and whales.

Another interesting question left unanswered for this situation is, if these sounds have been occurring since the summer, why is it making the news now? We don't know. It may have come to the attention of the CBC through political channels. The person advocating that the noise is a problem and its effects detrimental is Paul Quassa, a member of the legislative assembly who presented the case last month to the Nunavut legislature. He says that it's scaring the animals away.

> "That's one of the major hunting areas in the summer and winter because it's a polynya," an area of open water surrounded by ice that's abundant with sea mammals, he said.
>
> "And this time around, this summer, there were hardly any. And this became a suspicious thing."

But, it appears that the lack of animals is not a new thing. I found this from 2012 when a local remarked that the mining activity, which has really ramped up in this area, seemed to be affecting the wildlife population.

> "For the past two years," he adds, "I've been noticing less ring seal and less bearded seal in that area. Baffinland has been testing sonar to sound the depth of the water, and sea mammals are hearing it big time. I use sealskins a lot for ropes and food, and I've been noticing it's been harder to hunt seals."

The mining company, Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation has developed the Mary River mine over 100km northeast of the town. According to the CBC article, some people think that the company is conducting sonar surveys or other activity in the area. The company says no, they aren't. Side scan sonar was used several years ago during the development of a port for the Mary River mine to ascertain the depths for ship safety. Ships are now running through full of iron ore.



Map showing mine site. Original resolution was low. Baffinland.com.

We must be cognizant that the news report is not giving us all the necessary information for a fair determination of the claims. They never do. Due to the remoteness of the location, additional information may be difficult to obtain. But we also see many other factors at play here. The locals have a list of possible "theories" as to what is going on. These are more like imaginative speculation and guesses. They aren't theories since they have no support so far and can't be tested. Options proposed were…

Submarines

> Internal correspondence between sources in the Department of National Defence, obtained by CBC News, suggest submarines were not immediately ruled out, but were also not considered a likely cause.

Igloolik is about 70 kilometres north of an active military site called Hall Beach. The military says they are investigating the complaint about the sounds.

Greenpeace

> “We’ve heard in the past of groups like Greenpeace putting in some kinds of sonars in the seabed to get the sea mammals out of the way so Inuit won’t be able to hunt them,” Quassa said.

But no boats have been seen. Greenpeace denies doing anything of the sort.

Mining

No unusual mining activity can be connected with the noise and the mining corporation says they don’t have sonar equipment in the water.

Underwater activity

> Quassa says no territorial permits have been issued for work — such as construction, blasting or hydrography — in the area that could explain the noise.

So, from what we are given, it’s not clear that there even IS a mystery sound. We do see that increased industrial activity is going on here and has been for several years. There is potential military activity nearby and a suspicion among locals that something is wrong. Could it be that the industrial activity or a natural cause is to blame for the decreased wildlife? Are the locals erroneously attributing the cause to a particular but misguided cause?

The National Post’s latest also notes that this area is known for tall tales about strange objects and possible foreign submarines in the sea. So watch for that to be elaborated upon to enhance the mystery.

There has to be an actual mystery before we seek to solve it. As presented, this story of the mystery sounds of Igloolik contains too many open questions to even begin to formulate an answer. Mystery mongering is unwarranted, and speculation, though human nature, just causes more trouble and could lead the community away from finding the real answer to their concerns. However, I’d bet the locals know more about this story than the CBC revealed. What they know might ruin the “mystery” angle to the story. We won’t hear about that.

idoubtit

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'I'm not dead,' Central Florida man says

clickorlando.com

Nearly 10,000 erroneous deaths reported annually

Posted: 11:10 PM, September 23, 2016 Updated: 11:58 PM, September 23, 2016

PORT ORANGE, Fla. - As retiree Lee Miller was waiting for his terminally ill wife at her oncologist's office, he logged on to his bank's website to verify that his monthly Social Security payment had been deposited and his online bills were paid.

Although Miller's wife was covered by health insurance, he needed cash to purchase additional medical supplies.

Miller, 70, discovered that his savings account had been completely drained.

Most of the money in the Vietnam veteran’s checking account was gone, too.

"They left me $80," said Miller. "I was furious. At first, I thought I'd been hacked."

But instead of being targeted by a thief, Miller later learned that the federal government had intentionally withdrawn his money, assuming that he no longer needed it.

"They told me I was dead," Miller said.

"I died in 2012, September 2012."

Errors in master death file

Miller is one of nearly 10,000 living Americans who are erroneously reported dead to the Social Security Administration (SSA) each year.

In most cases, the citizens' names, birth dates and Social Security numbers are mistakenly entered into SSA's master death file, a computer database used by government agencies, financial institutions, medical researchers and genealogists.

"This is not a unique problem, unfortunately," said U.S. Rep. Ron DeSantis, who is helping Miller correct the error and get his money back from the government.

"Someone makes a mistake by inputting the wrong number into a database, and there is major fallout as a result."

As soon as Miller saw that his money was missing, he contacted his bank.

"The said a 'death notice' had been issued and a red flag had been put on all my accounts," said Miller.

The funds in Miller's savings account were transferred on Aug. 11 into his checking account, bank records show.

The same day, the SSA and the U.S. Treasury Department withdrew six payments of $1,635 from Miller's checking account, the same amount as his monthly Social Security payment.

"They owe me almost $10,000," said Miller, who thinks the agencies were trying to prevent fraud by recouping benefits paid to him after the government thought he was dead.

"(Bank employees) said they were very sorry. It's obviously a mistake. But it was my responsibility to correct it, and there was nothing they could do to replace the funds," Miller told News 6.

Miller also learned that his Medicare supplement health insurance might have been canceled.

"My insurance company called me and said, 'I've got a death notice here and you have prescriptions you have requested refills on,'" Miller said.

The retiree marched over to his local SSA office and demanded answers.

"I'm standing right there with all the documentation proving I'm alive," he said.

"No one has been able to give me an accurate answer as to how it happened or why it happened."

SSA responds

An SSA spokesman declined to tell News 6 why the agency believed that Miller was dead, citing privacy laws. However, the agency said it was providing assistance to Miller.

"Social Security receives death information from a variety of sources (family members, funeral homes, federal agencies, financial institutions, etc.)," SSA deputy regional communications director Frank Viera wrote in an email to News 6.

SSA Inspector General report on erroneous deaths

"If an error occurs -- once we are notified -- we take action to correct our records as soon as possible."

Just a small fraction, .35 percent, of the 2.8 million new death reports added to SSA's records each year are erroneous, according to the agency.

But that's still about 9,800 Americans who must prove to banks, insurance companies, law enforcement and others entities that they are not dead.

In Miller's case, an SSA employee asked him to sign an affidavit certifying that he is "alive and well."

Congress demands action

"When you're looting somebody's bank account, you need to rectify that as soon as humanly possible," said DeSantis.

"The more the public sees some of these mistakes and they see how it negatively impacts the American people, the more scrutiny (SSA) will have."

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio is also critical of errors in SSA's master death file.

"This is troubling news for Florida's seniors because the SSA's definition of status influences payments from various federal agencies," Rubio wrote in a letter to SSA's acting commissioner, Carolyn Colvin.

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio's letter to Social Security Administration

Rubio is urging SSA to follow through with plans to notify seniors and their families in writing about potential erroneous death notices and allow them to confirm their status.
The senator also believes that it should be SSA's responsibility to notify federal agencies, credit bureaus and banks when records are incorrectly classified.

"Doing so would prevent financial hardship for a substantial number of seniors who rely on these benefits," Rubio wrote.

Miller said that before the SSA entered him into the master death file, he wishes the agency had checked with the Internal Revenue Service to see if he was still paying taxes.

"Or they could have just called me before somebody actually pushed that button and said 'He's dead,'" Miller told News 6.
"Get your act together and do some research before you ruin somebody's life."

SSA: Monitor your records

The SSA recommends that Americans regularly monitor their credit and financial records for any irregularities.

If anyone suspects hat he or she might have been reported as deceased, the agency recommends visiting a local SSA office to fix the mistake.

More than a month after draining Miller's bank accounts, the government has reimbursed most of the retiree's money.
But Miller said he's still going through what has been described to him as the "resurrection process."

"I may still be dealing with other agencies, driver's licenses, who knows?" said Miller.

"I think this is something that is going to go on for a while."

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Boy born with his head upside down dies just months after surgery

07:57 EST, 7 November 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Tragic end for the boy born with his head upside-down: Indian teenager whose story moved the world dies just eight months after life-changing surgery

- **Mahendra Ahirwar had a condition making his head hang at 180-degrees**
- **13-year-old, from Madhya Pradesh, India, needed help to do most things**
- **He suddenly passed away eight months after neck-straightening op**

By Helen Roberts for MailOnline

A 13-year-old boy in India whose head was hanging at a 180-degree angle has died just eight months after life-changing surgery to fix it.

Mahendra Ahirwar, who suffered from a rare condition called congenital myopathy which made the muscles in his neck so weak his head would hang, had been absolutely fine in the morning.

His mother Sumitra, 36, said he had his lunch on Saturday, lay down to watch TV and at around 3pm passed away.



Crocked: Schoolboy Mahendra Ahirwar (pictured) had a rare condition which made his neck muscles so weak that his head hung to one side and he saw the world at a 180-degree angle



After the life-changing surgery, Mahendra, above, could finally see the world the right way up

Before the operation Mahendra, pictured, was unable to go to school. But after the op he was allowed to join the other children, while wearing a neck brace

Dr Rajagopalan Krishnan, who completed the surgery to straighten his neck in February this year, said he was left shocked by his sudden death.

He said: 'I can only conjecture that a massive cardiac or pulmonary event might have occurred and often there are no premonitory symptoms in such cases. I think myopathy and poor chest muscles caught up with him in the end.



‘He was among the bravest children I’ve seen since my return to India and I see the most terrible and neglected deformities.'

Dr Krishnan said: 'For me, the joy and smile on his face when his head stopped sagging was one of the defining moments in my decision to operate on children with neglected and awful spinal disorders.

‘I am sure his absence will cause anguish to everyone who was involved in his care, his smile was brighter than the sun after his neck was straightened.'



Prior to surgery, his mother Sumitra, 36, said: 'I can't see Mahendra suffer any more. Watching his life is devastating. He cannot do anything by himself'

Before surgery Mahendra needed his mum to feed, bathe and dress him. His siblings Surendra, 11, and 14-year-old Manisha, both went to school. And his older brother Lalit, 17, tried to find work. Meanwhile he was left at home. Even his friends used to ignore him



Mahendra's fortunes were changed when a mother-of-two living 4,000 miles away in the UK read about his plight and launched a crowd funding page to raise £12,000 for his surgery

Today Mahendra’s father Mukesh Ahirwar, 42, and his mother Sumitra spoke of their devastation.

Sumitra said: ‘I had so many plans and dreams for him. I wanted him to grow big. He dreamt of opening a general store and we were going to help him. His dreams are shattered now.

‘He’d been playing in the morning, had breakfast, took a shower and took a ride on his wheelchair inside the house. After having lunch, he asked to watch TV. I switched on his cartoon, and he coughed twice.

'He asked me to rub his chest and then tried a third cough but died. I started crying loudly and called his name. I ran outside, I kept shouting "my son isn’t moving", and a neighbour phoned the doctor. The doctor came within 15 minutes and declared he was dead. I fell to the floor and held him tightly. I didn’t want to let him go.’





In February Mahendra (pictured, with Dr Krishnan) spent a fortnight in the Apollo Hospital in Chennai, before being allowed to go home to recover. Sadly he has now passed away

The family cremated Mahendra in a traditional Hindu ceremony at the weekend, surrounded by 25 friends and family.

Sumitra, who has two other sons Lalit, 17, and Surendra, 11, as well as daughter Manisha, 14, who was very close to Mahendra, added: ‘His things are scattered everywhere.

'Our house is filled with his belongings. Nobody thought this day would come. He was fine. He even said "I'm absolutely fine Mum". His voice echoes in my ear. The way he used to call me. I am devastated. I feel everything is over.'

Mahendra hit the headlines with his extraordinary condition last year and his story touched the heart of mother of two Julie Jones, from Liverpool, who went on to raise £12,000 for Mahendra to have life changing surgery.

A documentary, The Boy Who Sees Upside Down, was aired on Channel 5's Extraordinary People series, in May, this year, and followed Mahendra’s remarkable journey seeing him endure a ten-hour operation to remove disks from his neck, and replace them with bone graft from his pelvis before a metal plate was fitted in his neck to secure it straight.



In the first surgery of its kind, Dr Krishnan, who spent 15 years working for the NHS in the UK, had to operate on Mahendra’s spine by opening up the front part of his neck. In theatre, the front of his cervical spine was left completely exposed because of his extraordinarily thin skin

Dr Krishnan, from Apollo Hospital, in Delhi, who had worked for the NHS for 15 years before returning to India to help extreme spinal disorders, was amazed by Mahendra’s speedy recovery and had been overjoyed at the way his neck had healed.

Dr Krishnan added: 'Mahendra's death is not a complication of the surgery or any other intervention. If that was the case, he would have died on the operating table or in ICU, not eight months later.

'His lifespan was limited irrespective of anything else but at least he had several months of being able to see upright.

He's with God now. I hope he is able to find peace. He's had a painful life. I hope wherever he is, he is pain-free
Sumitra, mother

'The most common cause of death in congenital myopathy is from cardiopulmonary complications. There are so many types of congenital myopathy and many subtypes that it's impossible to identify which one Mahendra had and the prognosis in terms of life expectancy.

'I still can't believe he is gone and I will miss him greatly.'

Mahendra was overwhelmed with appreciation when he was given the opportunity to have his neck straightened earlier this year.

Sumitra said: 'My little son had the privilege of meeting foreigners and good people. He was treated by the biggest doctors in this country. For him, seeing a different city was like seeing a different world.



Recovery: Mahendra's family were overjoyed that the teenager can finally go to school. But eight months after the op he has tragically passed away

'He used to get so excited to see big cars. All the presents he received were always on his bed. He was playing with his car until his last day, he was very possessive with it.

'Dr Krishnan gave him a new life. He gave my son a new vision, a new way to see the world. But in the end it was for a very short time. He enjoyed his new life for just eight months. I wish he could have lived longer to see more.

'I will miss him. I've no idea how I'll cope with the loss. He's with God now. I hope he is able to find peace. He's had a painful life. I hope wherever he is, he is pain-free.'

Comments (

garlichips, belfast, Ireland, about 17 hours ago

I have been following Mahendras story and I am so shocked and saddened to learn that he has passed away. My sincere condolences to his family....fly high Mahendra xxx

only me, Whats left of England, United Kingdom, about 17 hours ago

Brave boy, such a shame.

billy44, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom, about 17 hours ago

So sad. Well done to his family for supporting him through this terrible ordeal. RIP.

bellapops, Surrey, United Kingdom, about 18 hours ago

Terribly sad. RIP Mahendra.x

Alison Mackie, Edinburgh, United Kingdom, about 18 hours ago

Bless him...May he be now At Peace

Rof, Wafflecoat, United Kingdom, about 18 hours ago

Poor kid,RIP

Citizen Khan, Sparkhilll They All Know Me, United Kingdom, about 18 hours ago

RIP young man

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Notebook of Ghosts

Indiana Cemeteries: Mound Cemetery

Posted on October 4, 2016by



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It was the first weekend of October. The air was cold and the sky was overcast. Obviously, it was time to visit a cemetery.

I drove to the small town of Pine Village, which was a very solitary drive down country roads. I was surrounded by livestock, corn fields, and farm houses. I even saw a goat standing on top of a sitting cow. A perfect Sunday drive and the ideal scenery for this taphophile.

I was looking for Mound Cemetery, which is indeed…a mound. A friend was kind enough to share a screen shot via Google Maps. As you can see, it has a very unique layout.



googlempas

Mound Cemetery has some very interesting Indiana history as described by Genealogy Trails:

Mound (Round) Cemetery is a unique landmark in Adams Township with much speculation that the large perfectly shaped mound which rises about 30 feet was an Indian mound. It is encircled by a road about one-fourth mile in length, forming a circle at a crossroads. The larger portion, three-fourths, of the mound was donated for a cemetery by the Martindale family; the remaining one-fourth was purchased from the Little family. Many of the early settlers of Adams Township are buried there.

When I arrived to Mound Cemetery I was very taken aback. It was eerily quiet. I could only hear distant birds and the wind blowing through the corn. I was very alone. I'll admit to looking back a few

times to make sure I was *actually* alone. I blame it on the weather.

The cemetery, along with its interesting layout, was beautiful. At its highest point you get great views of the surrounding countryside. I loved this cemetery. I wish it had seating, because I would have sat there for hours.



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Here are some shots from the Mound towards the surrounding roads.



img_2204

The cemetery had many older memorials with hand imagery. There were also a few gravestones dedicated to those who served in the Civil War, World War I and II.



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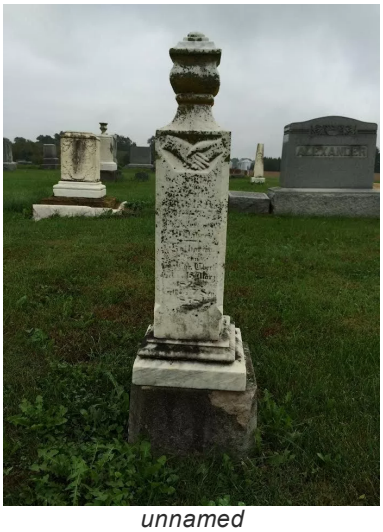


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Is this the ghostly shape of the infamous 'Black Monk'? Spooky image baffles ghost hunter

express.co.uk

express_logo

DOES this picture taken in the house of the "most violent poltergeist haunting in Europe" show the ghostly shape of the infamous 'Black Monk' peering out of it?

PUBLISHED: 14:43, Wed, Sep 21, 2016 | UPDATED: 15:54, Wed, Sep 21, 2016

Pete Boulton and pal Rob Hughes run Ghostnspectors Paranormal Group and visited 30 East Drive in Pontefract, West Yorks, in June to investigate.

The house was the site of one of Britain's most notorious alleged hauntings when the Pritchard family were subjected to years of torment by the so-called 'Black Monk of Pontefract'.

Dad-of-one Mr Boulton's picture of the hallway shows a mirror with a face staring out of it, with either black hair around it or a black hooded robe - though there was no one near him at the time.



MERCURY

The ghoulish apparition appears in the same spot that the Black Monk, also known as Mr Nobody or 'Fred', is said to regularly stand and was where 14-year-old Diane Pritchard was dragged by an invisible hand.

Mr Boulton, from Stockport, Greater Manchester, said: "We arrived around 7pm in the evening and began wandering around the house.

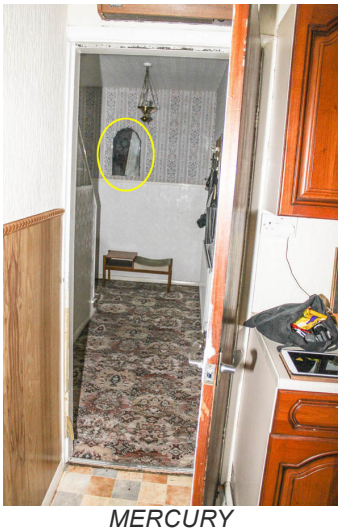
"I began taking photos like usually do at a new location and I took quite a few of the hallway near the stairs. I was just snapping away at random at the house, not at anything in particular.

"I took three or four pictures and one was particularly dark so when I got home I put it on the computer to brighten it up.

> It came as a surprise. It's difficult to say what it is
>
> Pete Boulton

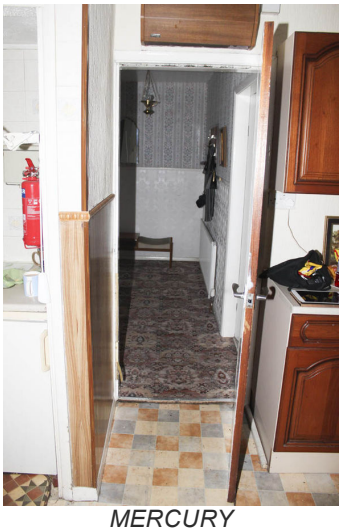
"[It was as I brightened it up that] I noticed there was a weird shape in the mirror. No one from the group was downstairs [at the time]. So it couldn't have been anyone from the group.

"To be honest I was a bit reluctant to share it as it seemed too good to be true. It looks like a figure. But that was it, as soon as I saw it I shared it on social media.



MERCURY

"It wouldn't have freaked me out if I had seen it there and then [in the house]. But it might have freaked a few of the others out. I would have got quite excited by it as that's why we are there.



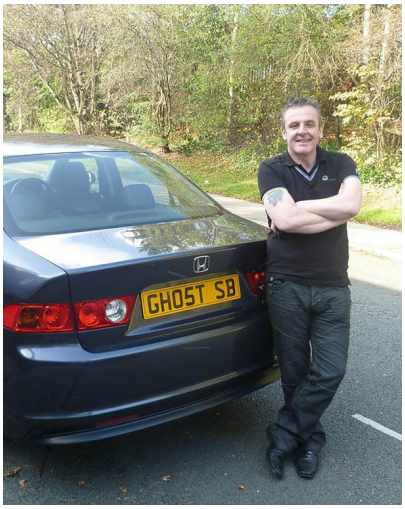
MERCURY



MERCURY

"It came as a surprise. It's difficult to say what it is. There's still a chance it is just pareidolia [seeing faces in shapes] however I asked other people what they could see but I didn't tell them what I had seen.

"Most saw what I did. With pareidolia, people usually see different things - that's why you can dismiss stuff usually. But not this one as everyone saw the same thing.



MERCURY

"I haven't dismissed it due to this and certainly to me it's unexplained.

"There is no evidence it definitely is paranormal. I hope that it's a genuine capture [of something paranormal].

"I would love that but I've been doing it that long I am realistic about my expectations."



MERCURY PRESS

Jean and Joe Pritchard moved into 30 East Drive with their two children Phillip, 15, and Diane, 12, in August 1966 and allegedly began experiencing paranormal occurrences almost immediately.

Inexplicable events were said to include green foam appearing the taps, objects being thrown around and levitating, photographs being slashed and even family members being slapped and shoved downstairs.

It is said that later on in their occupation of the haunted house, Diane's hair stood on end and she was dragged upstairs - the same stairs that can be seen in Pete's picture - apparently leaving finger marks on her throat.

Mr Boulton said: "Everyone knows that location as it is very well known. However we didn't have a majorly active experience. The odd thing happened but nothing necessarily paranormal.



The house has become notorious among ghost hunters

"It's a fascinating location, very atmospheric. It's an iconic place - that's why [ghost hunters] want to go.

"The poltergeist case there is very famous and that's what attracted me to it, but I didn't expect much.

"There are films about the house, though I didn't experience anything on that level. I would have left pretty sharpish. It's only interesting up to a point."

The haunting at 30 East Drive was the subject of the 2012 horror movie When The Lights Went Out and was investigated for the Halloween special of Most Haunted Live in 2015.

The house remains open for bookings - though Ouija boards and exorcisms are banned on the property.

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Carlow County - Ireland Genealogical Projects (IGPTM)

Irish Burial Laws

Written by Cara Sept 2007

Irish Burial Laws

To write about anything pertaining to burials in Ireland, the laws of those days will have to be touched on, it is not sufficient to say, that the Roman Catholics were not always buried in their own graveyards, and not always according to their own faiths, it would and will be necessary to touch upon those laws that were governing Ireland in those years past. As this then shows the reasons behind mixed grave yards in Ireland. Which of course did and do still exist, which is shown by headstones, found in those graveyards.

1 - Queen Mary who succeeded Edward VI. in 1553, restored the Catholic religion in England and Ireland.

2 - During Mary's reign Ireland was quite free from religious persecution. The Catholics were now the masters; but they showed no disposition whatever to molest the few Protestants that lived among them. Ireland indeed was regarded as such a haven of safety, that many Protestant families fled hither during the troubles of Mary's reign.

3 - On the death of Mary in 1558, Elizabeth became queen. Henry VIII. had transferred the headship of the church from the Pope to himself; Edward VI. had changed the state religion from Catholic to Protestant; Mary from Protestant to Catholic; and now there was to be a fourth change, followed by results far more serious and lasting than any previously experienced.

4 - A parliament was assembled in Dublin in 1560, to restore the Protestant religion; and in a few weeks the whole ecclesiastical system of Mary was reversed. The act of supremacy was revived, and all officials and clergymen were to take the oath or be dismissed. The act of uniformity was also re-introduced; i.e. an act commanding all people to use the Book of Common Prayer (the Protestant Prayer Book), and to attend the new service on Sunday under pain of censure and a fine of twelve pence for each absence--about twelve shillings of our money.

5 - Wherever these new regulations were enforced, the Catholic clergy had of course to abandon their churches, for they could not hold them without taking the oath. But they went among the people, administered the rites of the church, and took good care of religion just the same as before.

This compulsion prevailed however only in the Pale Mainly Dublin and in some few other places. In far the greatest part of Ireland the government had no influence, and the Catholics were not interfered with. Even within the Pale the greater body of the people took no notice of proclamations, the law could not be enforced, the act of uniformity was a dead letter, and the greater number of the parishes remained in the hands of the priests.

The Catholic parish clergy, i.e. the existing parish priests, were not disturbed; but all had to be registered, and should give security for good behaviour. All bishops, Jesuits, friars, and monks were ordered to quit the kingdom by the 1st of May 1698. Any who returned were guilty of high treason: punishment death. For any priest landing in Ireland, imprisonment, after which transportation to the Continent. No person to harbour or relieve any such clergy. Any priest who turned Protestant to get a pension of £30. No burials in churchyards of suppressed monasteries. No Catholic chapel to have steeple or bells. *

Social position of Catholics and Protestants were not to intermarry. If a Protestant woman married a Catholic, her property was forfeited to the next Protestant heir. A Protestant man who married a Catholic was to be treated as if he were himself a Catholic.

A Catholic could not serve on a grand jury, and an attorney could not take a Catholic clerk.

From the time of Elizabeth Protestantism remained the religion of the state in Ireland, till the disestablishment of the church in 1869.

Some Burial Customs

On the death of a Christian a bell was rung. Some even said a bell was placed in the vault so if the person was not dead they could ring it to be let out. The body was watched or waked for one or more nights. In case of eminent persons the watch was kept up for seven days as it was St. Patrick was waked for twelve nights; Among the pagan Irish, seven nights and days was the usual time for great persons. In Christian obsequies lights were kept burning the whole time: during St. Patrick's twelve-night wake, the old Irish writers tell us* that night was made like day with the blaze of torches.*

The mourners raised their voices when weeping This wailing was called caoi or caoine [kee, keena], commonly anglicised to keen or keening. The lamentation was often accompanied by This custom has also come down to modern times. A regula and is known as a eulogy, composed and recited at the time of death.

Among the Irish pagans it was the custom which has continued to Christian times and is practiced today to wash the body.

The corpse was wrapped in a recholl, (shroud or winding-sheet) also called esléne which is derived from es, death, and léne, a shirt called a 'death-shirt. Taken either by a cart drawn by an oxen. The deal coffin being a later edition and this then gave the men who carried the man a handle to hold and in then came the edition of a black coach and black horses with plumes of black feathers, allowing of course that one could afford the fee.

And in later times the man made hearse driven by man himself. In Ireland today the people turn out to walk the coffin to the Church where it is rested, until the following days service, and it is then, yet again that the folk turn out and walk behind the hearse to the graveside.

Right of Burial

Every parishioner and inhabitant in a parish and every person dying with the parish has the right to be buried in the parish church yard or burial ground. The right is enforceable at Common Law and not merely in the Ecclesiastical Court(e) R v Taylor 1721, Burn Ecclesiastical Law, Vol 1., pge 258.

If a parish is divided into Ecclesiastical districts under the Church Buildings Acts (1818-1827) and there is no burial ground within any such district, then, until, a burial ground has been provided, the bodies of a person dying within such district may be interred in the cemetery of the parish church, in al respects as if such division had not taken place.

But when any such district which has become a new parish by virtue of the new Parish Act 1856 has a burial ground of its own, the inhabitants of the district lose the right of being buried in the churchyard of he mother parish. Strangers to the parish, (persons not connected to the parish) with the permission of the incumbent and the church wardens and can if it causes inconvenience to the parishioners, is an offence against Ecclesiastical Law and might probably be restrained by injunction.

The right of burial does not entitle the representative of the deceased to insist upon the burial of the deceased in any part of the churchyard, and there cannot be a good custom entitling the inhabitants of a particular parish to be buried as near as possible to their ancestors. The right of burial extends only to burial in an ordinary manner. It does not carry with it the right to erection of a monument .(See Tombs and inscriptions)Parishioners and others entitled to a right of burial in the parish churchyard have not, as such, any right to burial within the church (this right being afforded generally to the clergy themselves.)

Exclusion from Christian Burial

Persons who die un-baptised or excommunicated, or who have laid violent hands upon themselves, are excluded Ecclesiastical law from Christian Burial, and the full burial service must not be read over the remains. Although it has been stated, the burial service according to the rites of the Church is not to be used in the case of person who has never been baptised, a minister may not refuse to perform the service in the case of a person baptised according to the forms of a Church or sect other than the Church of England, or by a layman in the name of Trinity* *Until 1844 Papists were not only permitted, but required to be buried with the Church of Ireland service, under the sanction of penalty imposed on the representatives(stat.3. Jac 1, c.5,s.10, repealed by stat. 7 & 8 Vict.c.102) Baptism by the Primitive Methodist Church was also considered sufficient

*Children who died un-baptised were very often not buried within the burial grounds, but were afforded a strip of ground, which I have found, to be marked by Love stones, with no record of their passing inscribed on any stone. See under Memorial for Children

The body of every offender executed by process of Law must be buried with the walls of the prison within which judgement of death is executed on him, sometimes with representation some of these burials have taken place elsewhere. * An offender was generally buried close to a wall, where the sun did no shine on him/her.

Poor Law Unions Burials including Deceased Paupers

Poorhouse and Workhouses Rules of Notice of Burial must accompany the poor individuals The notice is to be in writing plainly signed with the name and stating the address of the person giving it; it is to be in a form; and it is to state the day and hour when the burial is proposed to take place. The notice, in the case of the deceased poor or others whom a board of guardians are required or authorised to bury, may be given to the Rector, Vicar, or other incumbent, in manner above stated, and also to the master of any workhouse in which the poor person may have died, or otherwise to the guardians, by the husband, wife, or next of kin of such person having charge of the burial (generally I have found this to be the person running the said institute).

1-Boards of guardians are bound as occupiers of their work houses, to provide for the burial of poor persons dying therein; except in the case of those dying on the premises in the their occupations.

2-Where the guardians of a parish or union are possessed of land suitable for the purposes of a burial ground, and land is consecrated, the guardians my lawfully direct any such dead bodies to be buried therein. Under the rites of the Church of England (Ireland) In the time of the Famine, many were buried in these pits, in these unmarked graves throughout Ireland.

3-Where a committee of an asylum undertake the burial of a pauper lunatic, and the public burial ground of the parish where the death took place is closed or inconveniently crowded, the burial may take place in a public burial ground, or some other parish with the consent of the Church wardens or minister of that parish. And the committee would then pay the burial fees under any statute or custom. The cost being met by the poor law union or the institution for lunatics

Modes of interment

1-Lying flat

2-Standing up

3- No coffin was used in the beginning of time, it was simply lined with moss and fern creating a soft bed for the user.

4-Cremation. In earlier days cremation was practiced but little is known of the practice Cremation was extensively practised in pagan Ireland; for urns containing ashes and burnt bones are found in graves in every part of the country.

Cremation act was introduced in 1902 (2 Edw.7.c.8)

STANDING UP

Occasionally the bodies of kings and chieftains were buried in a standing posture, arrayed in full battle costume, with the face turned towards the territories of their enemies. Standing up in graves. In 1848 a tumulus called Croghan Erin in the County Meath was opened, and a skeleton was found under it standing up. The pagan Irish believed that while the body of their king remained in this position, it exercised a malign influence on their enemies, who were thereby always defeated in battle

Fees on Burials in Churchyards

1- No fee in respect of Burial in a parish churchyard is due at common law, but a burial fee may be due by immemorial custom

2- The burial fee is by custom generally paid to the incumbent

3- There cannot be a valid custom for the payment of burial where no service is conducted

4- Burial fees by custom are not recoverable in a court of law, only in the Ecclesiastical Court only

5- In theory in order, that a customary burial fee should be payable, the custom must have originated before the time of legal memory.

6- Fees in additional to burial fees are generally paid in respect of the erection of monuments, the constructions of Vaults.

7- Fees were and still today are paid for the burial of strangers to the parish for instance if you died in Dublin and was not from Carlow and wished to be buried in Carlow there is an large and cumbersome fee that needs to be paid for that privilege. A modern trend to inter ashes in ancestors graves is on the up.

Monuments in Churches and Churchyards

After the establishment of Christianity it became customary to erect a tomb over the grave, having a flat slab on top, especially in the cemeteries of monasteries, with an inscription, generally in Irish, but sometimes in Latin. In many cases the monument was a simple inscribed pillar-stone; or as in many cases a simple rock which became known as a *Love Stone* was placed over the beloved deceased, and no record of passing recorded, only with the annals of the family.

In strictness it would seem that a person who places a monument to the dead in a church or churchyard otherwise than in pursuance of a faculty in that behalf renders himself liable to a criminal suit in the Ecclesiastical Court; and there cannot it seems , be a valid custom for the erection of such a monument in a particular church, even with the consent of the Churchwardens or the like, without a faculty (Seager v Bowles 1823). In practice, however, a faculty is seldom sought in an ordinary cases. The leave of the incumbent or churchwardens, or both, together with that of rector where the freehold is

vested in a rector other than the incumbent is obtained and treated as sufficient authority without more.

The placing of a monument in a church or church yard without a faculty in that behalf us further an act of trespass, in respect of which the incumbent or rector, as the case may be, has a cause of action if his consent has not been obtained. A faculty is not necessary to authorise a repair of a monument that has been lawfully erected. Modern Act *But today you must seek the permission of Heritage Service (formerly the office of Public Works) to work on a gravestone as they have introduced as a legal role in the protection of old graveyards in Ireland and this comes under the National Monument Act 1930-1994.

Copyright of headstones

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The nature of an inscription proposed to be places on a monument in a church or church yard may constitute a ground for the refusal of a faculty for the erection of the monument.

A monument set up in a church or churchyard remains the property of the person by whom during his life, and that person may accordingly sustain an action for trespass against anyone removing or defacing it; it is said on high authority that after the death of the person setting it up the monument becomes the property of the heir of the deceased in whose honor it was erected, and descends to the heirs of the latter, as being in the nature of an heirloom,, and at any rate that such heirs may sustain an action if the monument is interfered with .

The alteration of monument may, however be authorized by faculty.

Burials of Persons found Drowned

The overseer (including the Church wardens where they are ex officio oversees of any parish which any dead human body or bodies may be found thrown in, cast on shore from the sea by wreck or otherwise, or found in or cast on shore from any tidal r navigable waters, or found floating or sunken in any such waters and brought to the shore or bank, must upon notice to them that any such body or bodies are thrown or cast on shore by the sea, or as the case may be, and that the same is or are lying within the parish, cause the same to be removed forthwith to some convenient place and with all convenient speed cause the same to be decently interred in the church yard or burial ground of that parish, so that the expenses attending such burial do not exceed the sum which at the time is allowed in the parish for a pauper funeral

The minister, clerk, and sexton of the parish must without any improper loss of time, admit such bodies to be interred in the parish churchyard or burial ground, and perform their customary duties in respect of the burial, and are entitled by way of compensation to such sums as are usually paid on a pauper funeral

Such is the case of the headstone in Holy Trinity Castlemacadam Co Wicklow Ireland Where far from the sea stands a monument with a carved in white quartz a fouled

anchor, and which tells its own story from the inscription there on.

Side one Sacred to the memory Of Captain James Thomas Belton S.S. City of Dundee, By whose Gallantry all the passengers were saved, when during a fog the vessel was run into and sank in the Bay of Cardigan, Early on the morning of 4th October 1908 “When thou passest Through the Waters I will be with Thee” The remains were washed ashore at Ennereilly, and here by loving hands laid to rest on Hallow Eve. His name is one of the first inscribed on the Carnegie Trust Roll of Heroes Born at Hull 20th Nov 1836 This memorial was erected by his brothers, officers and friends to commemorate the heroic deed of a brave and noble Englishman Two of the officers both Irishmen- Patrick Leban Second Officer aged 45 years and Thomas Burke Quartermaster aged 47 years, shared the same glorious end going down with the ship.

* Noted from the Parish priests register Washed ashore at Ennereilly. Vessel sank in 15 minutes S (salvage) mission the Capt saved all the passengers, but lost his own life by so doing One pound fee paid but reduced (Drowned persons act 1808-1886)

In 1880 everyone was given free access to the graveyards - to enter and visit their own deceased and attend the funerals.

MEMORIAL TO CHILDREN

Although not of ancient times, but one close to my heart, is the story of the lass who approached the Union of Catholic Mothers Archdiocesan President in 1997 and told her the story of her mother having, given birth to a baby girl, this child had died , and that was in 1947. And what was still the custom then the baby girl was taken, placed with a woman who had just died.

Now the parents learnt of where the burial would be, and went to the cemetery to attend, but they turned away. Such was the custom of the day, that the powers that be thought they were protecting the mother and family, but through the years the mother of this baby girl had not come to terms with the loss of her child. Her daughter in 1997 asked if their was some way the Union of Catholic Mothers could help, to establish a memorial to babies who had died in the same circumstances as her sister.

A few weeks later, during a session of the UCM National Council Meeting, the loss of a baby was talked about in great depth, and many moving stories arose that had affected even their members. The Archdiocesan Committee realising there was a great need for this memorial approached Archbishop Kelly who in turn contacted the Cathedral Administrator Monsignor Cookson, they too were enthusiastic. The memorial was to be a free standing candle which would burn perpetually.

At the base would be rooms for flowers. The candle is located in the Children’s Chapel and is dedicated to all stillborn babies, babies who died soon after birth, ,miscarried babies, aborted babies, and babies whose final resting places are unknown..

Before you dismiss this as English with no Irish content, then let me assure you the babies that died in Liverpool were indeed of Irish origin.

They say time heals, but it only puts a thin membrane over a broken heart, which can at any moment be broken and you feel grief as intensely as at the beginning.

SUPERSTITIONS CONCERNING THE DEAD

1- The Byrne ancestors are supposed to hear three knocks a the onset of a death occurring in the family.

2- A coach and horses appear at the gates of Rossahane Co Wicklow which heralds a imminent death, of the O'Tooles connected to those already interred there.

3-The souls of the dead who may happen to die abroad, greatly desire to rest in Ireland. And the relations deem it their duty to bring back the body to be laid in Irish earth. But even then the dead will not rest peaceably unless laid with their forefathers and their own people, and not amongst strangers.

4-The corner of a sheet that has wrapped a corpse is a cure for headache if tied round the head.

5-It is believed that the spirit of the dead last buried has to watch in the churchyard until another corpse is laid there; or has to perform menial offices in the spirit world, such as carrying wood and water until the next spirit comes from earth. They are also sent on messages to earth, chiefly to announce the coming death of some relative, and at this they are glad, for then their time of peace and rest will come at last.

6-Any one meeting a funeral must turn back and walk at least four steps with the mourners.

7-If the nearest relative touches the hand of a corpse it will utter a wild cry if not quite dead.

8-All Hallows Eve the dead walk, and on every tile of the house a soul is sitting, waiting for your prayers to take it out of purgatory.

9-In one Irish family a cuckoo always appears before a death. A lady who arrived on a visit at a house observed one morning a cuckoo perched on the window-sill, but she felt no alarm, for there was no sickness in the family. Next day, however, one of the sons was carried home dead. He had been thrown from his horse when hunting, and killed on the spot.

10-In another family a mysterious sound is heard like the crashing of boards, and a rush of wind seems to pass through the house, yet nothing is broken or disturbed. The death of an officer in the Crimea was in this way announced to his family, for the news came immediately after the warning sound, and then they knew that the rush of the wind was the spirit of the dead which had passed by them, but without taking any visible form.

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I do not claim this as my own works in total but I give recognition to those of my ancestors Lady Francesca Wilde and a noted author P W Joyce whom I admire and own many of his works. But of course some of it is my own works. And it is free for all those who wish to use it for their own research.

Cara Sept 2007

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Irish dad's ashes blasted into night-sky in explosive Halloween farewell

14:49, 1 Nov 2016

thesun.ie

Family and friends gathered to say goodbye to much-loved mechanic and Halloween fan Barney Brack



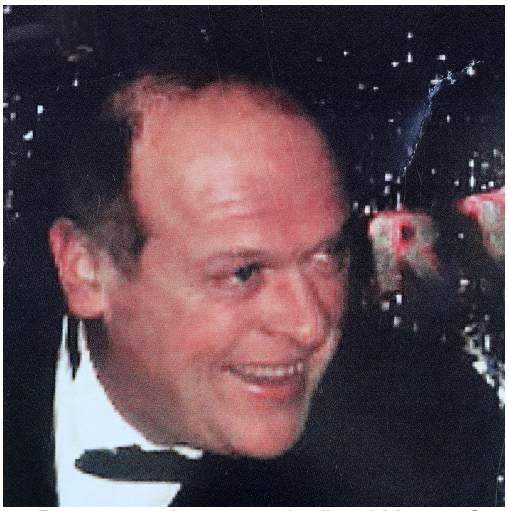
Main Image

Barney's ashes were blasted off in a fireworks display

IT was a Halloween party to remember as much-loved mechanic Barney Brack's ashes were blasted into Dublin's night sky — by a fireworks rocket.

Relatives, friends and members of the local community gathered to pay their respects to the popular Drumcondra dad-of-two, 54, who died suddenly a year ago today.

Halloween was Barney's favourite time, so his widow Noeleen and sons Niall and Aidan decided that some of his remains should be scattered around the area, lifting off from Tolka Park.



Barney was known as the 'Lord Mayor of Drumcondra'

Barney was known as the 'Lord Mayor of Drumcondra' Maxwells

Longtime friend Marty Whelan told how the Bracks had been planning the spectacular tribute for more than a month — and proceeded with it despite new Catholic Church guidelines banning the dispersal of ashes.

He explained: "Barney was known as our unofficial 'Lord Mayor of Drumcondra' and all of the local community loved him. Hundreds of people turned out for his send-off on Monday night.

"There is no doubt Barney would have gotten the humour in the fact his ashes were being fired off in a rocket from Tolka Park that was pointing towards the Catholic Archbishop's Palace .

"His family wanted his send-off to go ahead even though the religious ruling was made so recently.

"They simply wanted to remember a wonderful man in a way and at a time that meant so much to him.

"Despite it being an emotional event for his family and numerous friends, they were also surrounded by laughter given the irony of the event."

The display could be seen all over the community Maxwells



The display could be seen all over the community

Car expert Brack, who ran Barney's Autos on Richmond Road, was a well-known character on the city's northside.

His father had been known as the unofficial 'Mayor of Ballybough' — and Barney carried on the family tradition of serving the community around them.

Marty added: "Around 15 years ago, Barney took it upon himself to help out residents in Drumcondra when the area was hit by terrible flooding and so many people were thankful for what he did.

"He loved Dublin and Drumcondra so much that he was buried in his Dublin jersey. At Halloween he used to organise so many fun events for local children.

"Barney was such a happy character and he'd a great sense of devilment so there was such a happy atmosphere at the Halloween party. His rocket send-off would have really been Barney at his brilliant joking best."

Noeleen added: "It was obviously sad for us saying goodbye to part of Barney. But we were over the moon that so many relatives, friends and members of the community came along to watch a rocket scattering his ashes over Drumcondra.

"The family was honoured that so many people thought so highly of him."

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Maxwells

archaeology.org

http://www.archaeology.org/issues/202-1601/trenches/3946-trenches-ireland-medieval-skeleton-roots

ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology Magazine

By ERIC A. POWELL

Monday, December 07, 2015



Trenches Ireland Skeleton Tree



Felled tree, Ireland Medieval human remains in tree roots

(Courtesy Marion Dowd)

A storm blew over a 215-year-old beech tree in Sligo, Ireland, revealing a skeleton tangled in its root system. Archaeologist Marion Dowd was called in to investigate what she calls “an unusual situation,” and found that the remains belonged to a 17- to 20-year-old man who died of what appear to be knife wounds sometime between A.D. 1030 and 1200. Records indicate that there was a medieval graveyard in the area, and although no visible trace of it survives, Dowd suspects there could be more burials nearby.

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Is It Legal to Shoot Bigfoot?

mentalfloss.com



As long as there have been legends of mysterious ape men roaming the woods, there have been people determined to find them. Traps, cable TV shows, and continent-wide organizations exist for the sole purpose of locating Bigfoot. But for all the time and energy spent tracking the elusive creature, the proper protocol on what to do on the off-chance it's found remains unclear. Should Bigfoot hunters play dead? Lure it to civilization with beef jerky? Shoot it between the eyes and deliver it to their local taxidermist?

Before setting off on your next Bigfoot hunt, you might want to check with your state's wildlife department. It's true that Sasquatch is legendary, but the cryptid still receives hypothetical legal protection in some parts of the country.

The first place to outlaw Bigfoot slaughter explicitly was Skamania County, Washington. In 1969, two years after the release of the controversial Patterson-Gimlin film, the county found itself caught in the heat of peak Bigfoot fever. Believers flooded the Pacific Northwest with plans to track down the stealthy beast—and, as the Board of County Commissioners soon noticed, many visitors brought dangerous hunting weapons with them. Not only did this pose a risk to potential Bigfoots, but it also threatened the residents living in these supposed Sasquatch hotspots. More concerned with the safety of the latter than the former, the commissioners passed an official ordinance [PDF] stating that slaying Bigfoot was a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.



By 1984 the Bigfoot craze had settled down and legislators recategorized the intentional murder of Bigfoot as a gross misdemeanor punishable by one year in prison and/or a $1000 fine. The same amendment also named Bigfoot an endangered species in Skamania County and declared all land within their borders to be a "Sasquatch Refuge."

Not all places hold such a humanitarian attitude toward the mythical monster. In Texas, for example, it is perfectly legal to hunt and kill Bigfoot. At least that's according to L. David Sinclair, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's chief of staff, who responded to an email about the legalities of Bigfoot hunting in 2012. He wrote:

> "If the Commission does not specifically list an indigenous, non-game species, then the species is considered non-protected non-game wildlife [...] A non-protected non-game

> animal may be hunted on private property with landowner consent by any means, at any time."

Because Bigfoot isn't recognized as an official species by the state of Texas, hunting one is technically allowed (with the proper license and permissions, of course). California takes the opposite approach when dealing with cryptids: The state keeps a record of non-game mammals in the California Code of Regulations. If any animal is missing from that list, as is the case with Bigfoot, that means it can't be hunted legally.

Oregon follows a similar policy to California's in that any animal not classified under Oregon wildlife laws is considered "prohibited." Like the rest of the Pacific Northwest, Oregon has a long history of alleged Sasquatch encounters. "[We] receive periodic reports of Bigfoot sightings," Michelle Dennehy, wildlife communications coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, tells *mental_floss*. Instead of going after Bigfoot with a gun, Dennehy suggests a legal (and tongue-in-cheek) alternative for trackers planning their next expedition.

When it comes to capturing Bigfoot, a super-sized live trap is the way to go. According to Dennehy, "The cage trap should be large enough to allow Bigfoot to have sufficient space to turn, stand, and lay naturally and of sufficient strength to prevent escape." An extra-large cage from Havahart, the brand she recommends, is only big enough to contain a bobcat, so Bigfoot hunters will likely need to have a trap custom-made. Because Bigfoot falls under "prohibited" status, transporting, selling, or exchanging the animal is against the law in Oregon. The best course of action for any Bigfoot hunters who find success on their mission would be to call the wildlife department and allow state officials to handle it from there.

There's one more major factor that makes killing Bigfoot a bad idea no matter where in the country you find yourself: If the hirsute victim is deemed to be more human than ape, the crime could count as manslaughter. Skamania County, Washington addressed this possibility in their Bigfoot ordinance of 1984, saying: "Should the Skamania County Coroner determine any victim/creature to have been humanoid, the Prosecuting Attorney shall pursue the case under existing laws pertaining to homicide." And if the target turns out to be just a person in a Bigfoot costume (which, let's face it, is more likely than the alternative) the consequences wouldn't be any less severe. Just something to keep in mind if you had your heart set on collecting a Sasquatch trophy.

Have you got a Big Question you'd like us to answer? If so, let us know by emailing us at bigquestions@mentalfloss.com.

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People think this mysterious hovering shadow could be a witch

11:29, 13 Oct 2016 Updated 11:38, 13 Oct 2016 By Kara O'Neill

mirror.co.uk



A mysterious shadow spotting hovering around on an apartment block could be a 'witch', according to residents.

CCTV footage shows a cloaked figure apparently floating around the top floor of the residential building, occasionally disappearing out of view.

At one point, the ghostly shadow leaps from the top balcony onto a lower floor, but appears to be able to hover it mid-air and levitate back up again.

Eventually, the 'witch' makes the full jump to the first floor, where it appears lie in wait.



Cali es Cali

The mysterious shadow is thought by some residents to be a witch

It is at this point the clip cuts off.

The video has appeared on the Cali is Cali Facebook page and has been viewed more than 300,000 times.

The sighting occurred in Cali, a city in Columbia, although the exact location and date is not known.

The 'witch' appears to hover - before leaping onto a lower floor balcony



Cali es Cali

But while some viewers were convinced the bizarre figure was a witch, others disagreed.

One social media user wrote: "The allusion is that the spectre is a demonic entity and not a witch."

Another joked: "This is my mother making mischief."

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American Arrested in Tunisia for Terrorism Says He's the Islamic Messiah

201610270500

thedailybeast.com



161026-zavadski-arrested-islam

American Arrested in Tunisia for Terrorism Says He's the Islamic Messiah

Two brothers from Michigan converted to Islam, then moved to the Muslim world without speaking much Arabic. That didn't stop one of them from proclaiming himself to be the Mahdi.

10.26.16 10:00 PM ET

One of two Michigan brothers arrested in Tunisia this week on suspicion of terror says he is the Islamic messiah foretold to bring about Judgment Day, according to social media posts discovered by The Daily Beast.

NBC News identified one of the brothers as Patrick Alan Lawwill, 31, based on a passport shown to them by Tunisian officials Wednesday morning. Public records show Patrick has one brother who matches the age of the other suspect arrested in Tunisia, 32-year-old Nathan Wells Lawwill.

Nathan posts on Facebook under a pseudonym where he says he is a convert to Islam who does not speak much Arabic and recently married in Tunisia. The day before his arrest, Nathan wrote he is a divine being.

"I am two in one. Mahdi to Muslims and Messiah to the Jews," he wrote. "Christians hate me because they know Jesus when they see him. But not Jesus when I am hidden in plain sight. Did you not read all the parable and see the signs when I was still yet with you and now too?"

"3 signs confirm me," Nathan added later that day. "Jesus was hung not crucified. I was held down by the police in America. I was sent to protect Tunisia from the US."

Tunisian authorities told Tunisia Live that the brothers were found unwashed with long beards on Oct. 25 and that they had radical content on their computers. They were reportedly living near a university campus in Jendouba, close to Tunisia's border with Algeria. Initial reports said the brothers were planning an attack on the Algerian border, but Tunisian news site Kapitalis reports they may have since been released pending further investigation.

Nathan posted about men attacking him a day later.

"I was attacked by 6 men one specifically intent on stealing my phone. I held on tight and cursed them. Than I screamed one word by natural instinct: Allah!" he wrote in the early morning of Oct. 26. "And suddenly all went away quickly and 2 men came to me swiftly and took me swiftly to two more who took me to my home. Many think I'm a hypocrite or Satan. I'm not. I'm the rarest gift to Muslims. I don't look like much. I am small lamb and the mightiest lion. I don't lie but I frequently misunderstand because I'm highly intellectually intelligent."

On the Facebook page, Nathan says he was born in Okemos, Michigan, and spent his formative years in Lansing. He writes that he was homeless for parts of his early life, and then spent time in foster care, as did his brother Patrick. He said the brothers were put into foster care with "some really sick and twisted people" who abused them, Nathan said. He fled at one point, but the foster parents tried to stop him. (The foster parents named in the post are deceased, according to public records. Efforts to reach their immediate relatives were unsuccessful.) The locations identified by Nathan match the locations of the brothers in public records.

For many years he was a Christian, and he spent time in Florida. There, he married a woman who later divorced him. She did not return a request for comment. He wrote of his time as a Christian in 2007 as the source of "trials" that led him to Allah.

He also recently wrote about divorce from a Tunisian woman, and then cryptically about another potential marriage. Authorities say one of the brothers had a religious marriage to a Tunisian woman who was also detained.

Nathan has a lengthy criminal history in the U.S., and served time in Florida for domestic violence charges. He was on awaiting trial in Michigan on criminal sexual conduct, stalking, and domestic violence charges when he suddenly disappeared last fall.

"He appeared for a few court dates, and at one point he just failed to appear for a date in circuit court," attorney Michael Van Huysse told The Daily Beast. Eventually, Van Huysse asked to be removed as his attorney.

It was at that time, around a year ago, that he may have moved to Tunisia.

Today, Nathan Lawwill's religious ramblings on Facebook look more like self-important rants than typical jihadist screeds, sometimes reaching more than a dozen posts a day.

"I hope Facebook expands things because I am going to be the center of the world very quickly and it is already getting to be HUGE!!!" he wrote in one October post.

In one post on Oct. 18, he condemned jihadists by urging European Muslims to treat returning ones after the battle of Mosul kindly, but not to trust them.

"[InshaAllah] Allah will heal their hearts and restore to us our brothers and sisters mother's and father's our people will be whole again," he wrote.

At other times, he posted about a vague plan to help Tunisia that involved Saudi and Tunisian business partners. Other times, he wrote positively about President Barack Obama, praising him in a way that individuals with ties to extremist groups do not.

"President Obama you really are a very good man," he wrote. "If Russia and China will side with the US than you 3 will be the best in the world in all things. From you will the world be able to colonize Mars and Venus."

The brothers have not been charged and it's unclear whether they will be sent back to the United States. But in one October post, Nathan wrote that taking him back to America "would be destroying the US and this is not what I want either."

"I seek to destroy no one," he added.

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Israel launches major expedition to find more Dead Sea Scrolls — the crown jewel of Israeli antiquities

| November 14, 2016 2:07 PM ET nationalpost.com

Israel launches major expedition to find more Dead Sea Scrolls — the crown jewel of Israeli antiquities



JERUSALEM — An Israeli antiquities official says Israel is embarking on a major expedition to find more Dead Sea Scrolls.

Amir Ganor of the Israel Antiquities Authority says a government research team will spend the next three years surveying hundreds of desert caves near the Dead Sea, where the world's oldest biblical manuscripts were discovered in 1947. The collection is considered the crown jewel of Israeli antiquities.

The official says the expedition will begin in December.

Related

It will be the first large-scale archaeological survey of the area in more than 20 years. Looters have discovered ancient manuscripts in the area in recent years, prompting the government initiative.

Ganor spoke about the project on Monday with The Associated Press.

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The secret behind Italy's rarest pasta

By Eliot Stein 19 October 2016

bbc.com

BBC



Su filindeu, nuoro (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)

It's so difficult and time-consuming to prepare, that for 300 years only the women of a single Sardinian family knew how to make it.

Away from its famed cerulean seas, Sardinia's craggy interior is a twisting maze of deep chasms and impenetrable massifs that shelter some of Europe's most ancient traditions.

Residents here still speak Sardo, the closest living form of Latin. Grandmothers gaze warily at outsiders from under embroidered veils. And, in a modest apartment in the town of Nuoro, a slight 62-year-old named Paola Abraini wakes up every day at 7 am to begin making *su filindeu* – the rarest pasta in the world.



For 300 years, the recipe of su filindeu has remained in the town of Nuoro (Credit: Credit: ozzadavies/Flickr)

For 300 years, the recipe of su filindeu has remained in the town of Nuoro (Credit: ozzadavies/Flickr)

In fact, there are only two other women on the planet who still know how to make it: Abraini's niece and her sister-in-law, both of whom live in this far-flung town clinging to the slopes of Monte Ortobene.

No one can remember how or why the women in Nuoro started preparing su filindeu (whose name means "the threads of God"), but for more than 300 years, the recipe and technique have only been passed down through the women in Abraini's family – each of whom have guarded it tightly before teaching it to their daughters.

But after an unexpected invitation to Abraini's home, I found myself in her kitchen, watching her work.

I wasn't her first guest, though. Last year, a team of engineers from Barilla pasta came to see if they could reproduce her technique with a machine. They couldn't. After hearing rumours about a secret Sardinian pasta, Carlo Petrini, the president of Slow Food International, visited this spring. And this summer, British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver stopped by to ask Abraini if she could teach him how to make the dish. After failing for two hours, he threw his hands up and said, "I've been making pasta for 20 years and I've never seen anything like this."



Paola Abraini, 62, wakes up at 7 am every day to prepare the pasta (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)

Paola Abraini, 62, wakes up at 7 am every day to prepare the pasta (Credit: Eliot Stein)

"Many people say that I have a secret I don't want to reveal," Abraini told me, smiling. "But the secret is right in front of you. It's in my hands."

Su filindeu is made by pulling and folding semolina dough into 256 perfectly even strands with the tips of your fingers, and then stretching the needle-thin wires diagonally across a circular frame in an intricate three-layer pattern. It's so difficult and time-consuming to prepare that for the past 200 years, the sacred dish has only been served to the faithful who complete a 33km

pilgrimage on foot or horseback from Nuoro to the village of Lula for the biannual Feast of San Francesco.

When I arrived, the October feast was three days away and Abraini had just finished making enough su filindeu to feed the 1,500 pilgrims expected to descend on Lula from throughout Sardinia. She worked five hours every day for a month to make 50kg of the pasta, and for the larger nine-day feast in May, she'll prepare four times as much.

"There are only three ingredients: semolina wheat, water and salt," Abraini said, vigorously kneading the dough back and forth. "But since everything is done by hand, the most important ingredient is elbow grease."



The dish is so difficult to make that for 200 years it was not served to the general public (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)

The dish is so difficult to make that for 200 years it was not served to the general public (Credit: Eliot Stein)

Abraini patiently explained how you work the pasta thoroughly until it reaches a consistency reminiscent of modelling clay, then divide the dough into smaller sections and continue working it into a rolled-cylindrical shape.

Then comes the hardest part, a process she calls, "understanding the dough with your hands." When she feels that it needs to be more elastic, she dips her fingers into a bowl of salt water. When it needs more moisture, she dips them into a separate bowl of regular water. "It can take years to understand," she beamed. "It's like a game with your hands. But once you achieve it, then the magic happens."

When the semolina reached just the right consistency, Abraini picked up the cylindrical strand to stretch and fold the dough, doubling it as she pressed the heads of the su filindeu into her palms. She repeated this sequence in a fluid motion eight times. With each sweeping pull, the dough became thinner and thinner. After eight sequences, she was left with 256 even strands about half as wide as angel-hair pasta. She then carefully laid the strands on a circular base, one on top of another, to form a cross, trimming any excess from the ends with her fingers before repeating the process over and over.



First the dough is worked until it reaches the consistency of modelling clay (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)

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When she'd formed three layers, she took the base outside to dry in the Sardinian sun. After several hours, the layers hardened into delicate sheets of white razor-thin threads resembling stitched lace. Abraini then broke the circular sheets into crude strips and packed them into boxes, ready for the San Francesco feast's prior to place them in boiling sheep's broth with grated pecorino and offer it as a thick soup to the pilgrims.



The dough is then folded and pulled to create the pasta strands (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)



With each pull, the strands become thinner and thinner (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)



The pasta is done when there are 256 razor-thin, even strands (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)

"No one's really sure how this ancient tradition started, but it's at the heart of the festival," Stefano Flamini, this year's prior, told me. "If there's no su filindeu, there's no Feast of San Francesco."

But after more than 300 years in the same matrilineal family tree, these threads of God may need a miracle to survive for future generations. Only one of Abraini's two daughters knows the basic technique, and lacks the passion and patience of her mother. Neither of Abraini's daughters have daughters of their own. The two other women in Abraini's family who still carry on the tradition are now both in their 50s and have yet to find willing successors among their own children.

"This is one of the most at-risk foods of becoming extinct, in large part because it's one of the most difficult pastas to make that exists," said Raffaella Ponzio, head coordinator of Slow Food International's Ark of Taste, an initiative that aims to classify and preserve the world's most endangered culinary traditions. Of the project's 3,844 listed items, no other pasta is made by as few producers as su filindeu – making it both the world's rarest and most endangered pasta.

After drying, the layers harden into delicate sheets of threads that resemble lace (Credit: Eliot Stein)

"Conserving su filindeu isn't just a question of a culinary art form, but also a piece of cultural identity," Ponzio added.

Recognizing this, Abraini has done something previously unheard of with her family's tightly guarded dish: she attempted to teach girls in Nuoro from other families how to make it.

"It didn't go well," Abraini admitted. First, she approached the local government to see if she could open up a small school, but they told her there was no money. Then, she agreed to invite students into her home.

"The problem was that once they saw how I actually do it, they'd say, 'It's just too much work', and wouldn't come back," she said.



They are then laid on a circular base, one on top of the other (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)



Su filindeu is about half as wide as angel-hair pasta (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)



After drying, the layers harden into delicate sheets of threads that resemble lace (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)

Yet, Abraini refuses to let the tradition fade away, making it her mission to share su filindeu with the world. In the last few years, Italy's premier food and wine magazine, Gambero Rosso, has invited her to Rome twice so they can film her preparing the dish. Recently, she's begun making su filindeu for three restaurants in the area – and in the process, offering non-pilgrims a chance to taste it for the first time.

At one of those restaurants, Al Ciusa, her black squid-ink dyed su filindeu nero won Sardinia's Porcino d'Oro prize for best dish in 2010.

In 2010, the squid-ink su filindeu won Sardinia's Porcino d'Oro prize for best dish (Credit: Eliot Stein)

At another, Il Refugio, it's the most popular item on the menu.

"We have people coming from all over Europe just to taste it," owner Silverio Nanu told me as I sampled the dish.

Where to Try Su Filindeu

If you're in Sardinia between 1-9 May or 1-4 October, follow the long line of pilgrims to the San Francesco church outside Lula. Otherwise, try it at these three restaurants:

- If you can't stay the night at Sebastiano Secchi's Agriturismo Testone, at least pop in for dinner and taste the island's best rendition of Abraini's su filindeu pasta, served in mutton broth.
- At the expertly run Il Rifugio in downtown Nuoro, owner Silverio plays host out front while his son Francesco whips up su filindeu in the kitchen.
- Upscale Al Ciusa serves Nuoro's only version of su filindeu nero, which Abraini invented by combining the pasta with squid ink.

When I shared that news with Abraini, her eyes danced with delight.

"You know, for me it's a blessing just to be able to make su filindeu. I've been in love with it since the first time I ever saw it, and I love it more each day," she said. "I hope to continue to make if for many years ahead – but if one day I have to stop, at least I'll have a video."

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In 2010, the squid-ink su filindeu won Sardinia's Porcino d'Oro prize for best dish (Credit: Credit: Eliot Stein)

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Italy's oldest theme park reopens after eight years

thelocal.it



Construction workers at the Luneur amusement park in Rome. Photo: Alberto Pizzoli/AFP

The Local
news@thelocal.it
26 October 2016
11:40 CEST+02:00

Italy's oldest theme park will reopen on October 27th after lying unused for eight years.

And the Luneur theme park in Rome has had a bit of a makeover.

During the 54 years it was open, it was beloved by Romans of all ages before it closed amid financial and legal woes in 2008.

Now Luneur - which takes its name from the EUR district of Rome in which it is situated - will cater to children under 13 in particular.

The 25 child-friendly attractions include dodgems, a Wizard of Oz-inspired yellow brick maze and an interactive role-playing game called the Elven Path.



The park has been closed for eight years. Photo: Alberto Pizzoli/AFP

There will be special rooms for breastfeeding and baby-changing, events for pregnant mothers, trails and events designed for schools, and children's menus in all the eating areas.

The opening celebrations on Thursday will take place from 2pm onwards. And the park is opening just in time for Halloween, meaning there will be extra festivities (in fancy dress) between October 29th and November 1st.

Story continues below…

The video below explores the abandoned amusement park.

In fact, the park was never intended to be permanent. The rides were set up as part of Rome's 1953 Agricultural Fair, but were so popular that authorities decided to keep the site open for a few months each year.

After the 1960 Rome Olympics, the park was open all year round, before returning to a limited open season after five years and eventually closing in 2008.



The Local Europe AB
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The Green Fairy Book: Jack My Hedgehog

sacred-texts.com

The Green Fairy Book, by Andrew Lang, [1892], at sacred-texts.com

JACK MY HEDGEHOG

There was once a farmer who lived in great comfort. He had both lands and money, but, though he was so well off, one thing was wanting to complete his happiness; he had no children. Many and many a time, when he met other farmers at the nearest market town, they would teaze him, asking how it came about that he was childless. At length he grew so angry that he exclaimed: 'I must and will have a child of some sort or kind, even should it only be a hedgehog!'

Not long after this his wife gave birth to a child, but though the lower half of the little creature was a fine boy, from the waist upwards it was a hedgehog, so that when his mother first saw him she was quite frightened, and said to her husband, 'There now, you have cursed the child yourself.' The farmer said, 'What's the use of making a fuss? I suppose the creature must be christened, but I don't see how we are to ask anyone to be sponsor to him, and what are we to call him?'

'There is nothing we can possibly call him but Jack my Hedgehog,' replied the wife.

So they took him to be christened, and the parson said: 'You'll never be able to put that child in a decent bed on account of his prickles.' Which was true, but they shook down some straw for him behind the stove, and there he lay for eight years. His father grew very tired of him and often wished him dead, but he did not die, but lay on there year after year.

Now one day there was a big fair at the market town to which the farmer meant to go, so he asked his wife what he should bring her from it. 'Some meat and a couple of big loaves for the house,' said she. Then he asked the maid what she wanted, and she said a pair of slippers and some stockings. Lastly he said, 'Well, Jack my Hedgehog, and what shall I bring you?'

'Daddy,' said he, 'do bring me a bagpipe.' When the farmer came home he gave his wife and the maid the things they had asked for, and then he went behind the stove and gave Jack my Hedgehog the bagpipes.

When Jack had got his bagpipes he said, 'Daddy, do go to the smithy and have the house cock shod for me; then I'll ride off and trouble you no more.' His father, who was delighted at the prospect of getting rid of him, had the cock shod, and when it was ready Jack my Hedgehog mounted on its back and rode off to the forest, followed by all the pigs and asses which he had promised to look after.

Having reached the forest he made the cock fly up to the top of a very tall tree with him, and there he sat looking after his pigs and donkeys, and he sat on and on for several years till he had quite a big herd; but all this time his father knew nothing about him.

As he sat up in his tree he played away on his pipes and drew the loveliest music from them. As he was playing one day a King, who had lost his way, happened to pass close by, and hearing the music he was much surprised, and sent one of his servants to find out where it came from. The man peered about, but he could see nothing but a little creature which looked like a cock with a hedgehog sitting on it, perched up in a tree. The King desired the servant to ask the strange creature why it sat there, and if it knew the shortest way to his kingdom.

On this Jack my Hedgehog stepped down from his tree and said he would undertake to show the King his way home if the King on his part would give him his written promise to let him have whatever first met him on his return.

The King thought to himself, 'That's easy enough to promise. The creature won't understand a word about it, so I can just write what I choose.'

So he took pen and ink and wrote something, and when he had done Jack my Hedgehog pointed out the way and the King got safely home.

Now when the King's daughter saw her father returning in the distance she was so delighted that she ran to meet him and threw herself into his arms. Then the King remembered Jack my Hedgehog, and he told his daughter how he had been obliged to give a written promise to bestow whatever he first met when he got home on an extraordinary creature which had shown him the way. The creature, said he, rode on a cock as though it had been a horse, and it made lovely music, but as it certainly could not read he had just written that he would _not_ give it anything at all. At this the Princess was quite pleased, and said how cleverly her father had managed, for that of course nothing would induce her to have gone off with Jack my Hedgehog.

Meantime Jack minded his asses and pigs, sat aloft in his tree, played his bagpipes, and was always merry and cheery. After a time it so happened that another King, having lost his way, passed by with his servants and escort, wondering how he could find his way home, for the forest was very vast. He too heard the music, and told one of his men to find out whence it came. The man came under the tree, and looking up to the top there he saw Jack my Hedgehog astride on the cock.

The servant asked Jack what he was doing up there. 'I'm minding my pigs and donkeys; but what do you want?' was the reply. Then the servant told him they had lost their way, and wanted some one to show it them. Down came Jack my Hedgehog with his cock, and told the old King he would show him the right way if he would solemnly promise to give him the first thing he met in front of his royal castle.

The King said 'Yes,' and gave Jack a written promise to that effect.

Then Jack rode on in front pointing out the way, and the King reached his own country in safety.

Now he had an only daughter who was extremely beautiful, and who, delighted at her father's return, ran to meet him, threw her arms round his neck and kissed him heartily. Then she asked where he had been wandering so long, and he told her how he had lost his way and might never have reached home at all but for a strange creature, half-man, half-hedgehog, which rode a cock and sat up in a tree making lovely music, and which had shown him the right way. He also told her how he had been obliged to pledge his word to give the creature the first thing which met him outside his castle gate, and he felt very sad at the thought that she had been the first thing to meet him.

But the Princess comforted him, and said she should be quite willing to go with Jack my Hedgehog whenever he came to fetch her, because of the great love she bore to her dear old father.

Jack my Hedgehog continued to herd his pigs, and they increased in number till there were so many that the forest seemed full of them. So he made up his mind to live there no longer, and sent a message to his father telling him to have all the stables and outhouses in the village cleared, as he

was going to bring such an enormous herd that all who would might kill what they chose. His father was much vexed at this news, for he thought Jack had died long ago. Jack my Hedgehog mounted his cock, and driving his pigs before him into the village, he let every one kill as many as they chose, and such a hacking and hewing of pork went on as you might have heard for miles off.

Then said Jack, 'Daddy, let the blacksmith shoe my cock once more; then I'll ride off, and I promise you I'll never come back again as long as I live.' So the father had the cock shod, and rejoiced at the idea of getting rid of his son.

Then Jack my Hedgehog set off for the first kingdom, and there the King had given strict orders that if anyone should be seen riding a cock and carrying a bagpipe he was to be chased away and shot at, and on no account to be allowed to enter the palace. So when Jack my Hedgehog rode up the guards charged him with their bayonets, but he put spurs to his cock, flew up over the gate right to the King's windows, let himself down on the sill, and called out that if he was not given what had been promised him, both the King and his daughter should pay for it with their lives. Then the King coaxed and entreated his daughter to go with Jack and so save both their lives.

The Princess dressed herself all in white, and her father gave her a coach with six horses and servants in gorgeous liveries and quantities of money. She stepped into the coach, and Jack my Hedgehog with his cock and pipes took his place beside her. They both took leave, and the King fully expected never to set eyes on them again. But matters turned out very differently from what he had expected, for when they had got a certain distance from the town Jack tore all the Princess's smart clothes off her, and pricked her all over with his bristles, saying: 'That's what you get for treachery. Now go back, I'll have no more to say to you.' And with that he hunted her home, and she felt she had been disgraced and put to shame till her life's end.

Then Jack my Hedgehog rode on with his cock and bagpipes to the country of the second King to whom he had shown the way. Now this King had given orders that, in the event of Jack's coming the guards were to present arms, the people to cheer, and he was to be conducted in triumph to the royal palace.

When the King's daughter saw Jack my Hedgehog, she was a good deal startled, for he certainly was very peculiar looking; but after all she considered that she had given her word and it couldn't be helped. So she made Jack welcome and they were betrothed to each other, and at dinner he sat next her at the royal table, and they ate and drank together.

When they retired to rest the Princess feared lest Jack should kiss her because of his prickles, but he told her not to be alarmed as no harm should befall her. Then he begged the old King to place a watch of four men just outside his bedroom door, and to desire them to make a big fire. When he was about to lie down in bed he would creep out of his hedgehog skin, and leave it lying at the bedside; then the men must rush in, throw the skin into the fire, and stand by till it was entirely burnt up.

And so it was, for when it struck eleven, Jack my Hedgehog went to his room, took off his skin and left it at the foot of the bed. The men rushed in, quickly seized the skin and threw it on the fire, and directly it was all burnt Jack was released from his enchantment and lay in his bed a man from head to foot, but quite black as though he had been severely scorched.

The King sent off for his physician in ordinary, who washed Jack all over with various essences and salves, so that he became white and was a remarkably handsome young man. When the King's

daughter saw him she was greatly pleased, and next day the marriage ceremony was performed, and the old King bestowed his kingdom on Jack my Hedgehog.

After some years Jack and his wife went to visit his father, but the farmer did not recognize him, and declared he had no son; he had had one, but that one was born with bristles like a hedgehog, and had gone off into the wide world. Then Jack told his story, and his old father rejoiced and returned to live with him in his kingdom.

Grimm.

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Japanese Sub attacks Oilfield - American Oil & Gas Historical Society

aoghs.org

Soon after the start of World War II, a Japanese submarine attacked a refinery and oilfield near Los Angeles. The shelling caused little damage – but led to the largest mass sighting of UFOs in American history. It also was the first attack of the war on the continental United States.


We Will Take Offensive Soon, F.D.R. Promises

Strategy Going On Schedule, Says President

Rumors of Dire Disaster Spiked In Radio Talk

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

Morning Edition

SUBMARINE SHELLS ELLWOOD OIL FIELD

Allies Deal Japs Staggering Blow

33 Jap Ships Sunk, Damaged By U.S. Planes

4-Hour Blackout Lifted Shortly After Midnight

First Attack Of War On Continental U. S.

British Suffer

Russian Forces

American Fliers Shoot Down 43

Police, Defense Officials Guard

CITY'S ATTITUDE

Craft Methodically Hurls Missiles

A February 1942 Imperial Japanese Navy submarine's shelling of a California refinery caused little damage but created invasion (and UFO) hysteria in Los Angeles. Photo courtesy Goleta Valley Historical Society.

At sunset on February 23, 1942, Commander Kozo Nishino of the Imperial Japanese Navy and his I-17 submarine lurked 1,000 yards off the California coast. It was less than three months since the attack on Pearl Harbor. Los Angeles residents were tense.

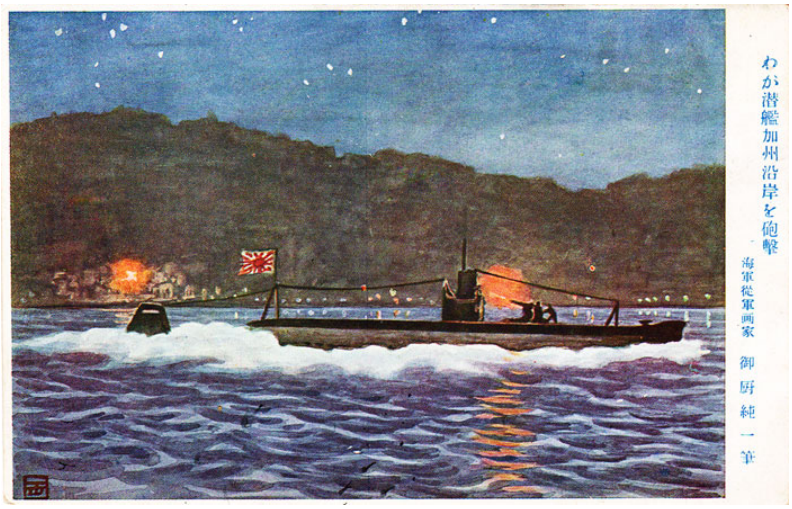


Japanese submarine I-17 bombarded an Ellwood, California, oilfield refinery visited by its commander before the war.

Soon after dark, the I-17 surfaced and began firing armor-piercing shells at the Bankline Oil Company refinery in Ellwood, a small oilfield community 12 miles north of Santa Barbara.

The Ellwood oilfield, about five miles long and up to a mile wide, was discovered in 1928. Commander Nishino targeted oil storage tanks, piers and other facilities he had toured before the start of World War II. Several of shells struck while others passed over Wheeler's Inn, whose owner reported the attack.

"We heard a whistling noise and a thump as a projectile hit near the house," recalled another witness. "I thought something was going wrong with the refiners."



A Japanese postcard from World War II commemorates the I-17's shelling the Ellwood refinery and storage facilities north of Santa Barbara. Image courtesy John Geoghegan.

The shelling continued for 20 minutes before I-17 escaped into the darkness. It was the first Axis attack on the continental United States of the war. "Shell California! Enemy U-boat sends many shots into oilfields near Santa Barbara, entire area is blacked out," declared the February 24 front page of the Chicago Tribune.

Although there were no injuries and minimal damage (a wrecked derrick and pump house), the barrage led to a public panic that soon intensified. Witnesses claimed seeing offshore enemy "signal lights."

Many newspapers began referring to the attack as the "Bombardment of Ellwood."

Long after the war, *Parade* magazine speculated that Commander Nishino targeted the Bankline Oil Company refinery because of a prewar affront.

According to a 1982 *Parade* article, while serving on an oil tanker docked near the refinery and being given a courtesy tour of the facilities, the Japanese officer slipped and fell. He apparently tumbled into a cactus – prompting laughter from his hosts. The article claimed the commander got his revenge by shelling the same refinery.



Discovered in 1928 by Barnsdall-Rio Grande Company, Ellwood oilfield extended beyond the shore of Ellwood Beach. Photo courtesy Goleta Valley Historical Society.

Commander Nishino sailed on to new combat assignments in the Aleutians – unaware of the strange result of his attack on Ellwood's oil refinery.

Despite missing their targets, dropping into the sea, on the beach, and into nearby cliffs, the Japanese artillery shells brought dramatic results. They not only fueled West Coast invasion fears, but also soon led to the largest mass UFO sightings in U.S. history.

Aliens Attack Los Angeles

As the "Bombardment of Ellwood" ended, the self-inflicted bombardment of the "Battle of Los Angeles" began.



The Ellwood oilfield terminals and tanks along the coastline have long since disappeared – today occupied by the Sandpiper Golf Club, one of the top 25 courses in the country, according to Golf Digest.

As Commander Nishino's I-17 made its way to Alaskan waters after firing about two dozen rounds, on February 25 thousands of war-jittery California residents were awakened at 3 a.m. by sirens and anti-aircraft fire.

"Scores of searchlights built a wigwam of light beaming over Los Angles," noted the Los Angeles Times as the U.S. Army's 37th Anti-Aircraft Brigade fired at elusive "unidentified airplanes." The brigade fired 1,340 rounds.

Expecting the worst after the refinery attack, residents watched the illuminated nighttime sky. Soon there were sightings of "unidentified flying objects" in addition to enemy aircraft.

"It was huge! It was just enormous! And it was practically right over my house," reported one UFO observer about the attack. "I had never seen anything like it in my life. It was just hovering there in the sky and hardly moving at all."

Anti-aircraft fire fell within the city, damaging homes and cars and fraying nerves. Many Los Angelenos imagined enemy aircraft. Others became fearful of extraterrestrial attackers. Fast moving "red or silver objects" were seen high in the sky accompanied by "a large object that hung motionless" in midair. Anti-aircraft shells burst around it. Rumors of a government cover-up began.


Los Angeles Times

Searchlights and Anti-aircraft Guns Comb Sky During Alarm

"Scores of searchlights built a wigwam of light beaming over Los Angles," noted one reporter about the 1942 panic from a Japanese submarine shelling a refinery. U.S. Army anti-aircraft firing caused more damage than the enemy attack.

Historians later offered several explanations and detailed photo analysis of the "Battle of Los Angeles" – and noted that it was the largest mass sighting of "UFO events" in American history.

Also known as the "Great Los Angeles Air Raid," the 1942 war drama began with a Japanese submarine commander who perhaps had a grudge against a California oil refinery. An "Avenge Ellwood" fund-raising campaign was created in early 1943 for a war bond drive. In 2012, the Goleta Valley Historical Society hosted a special exhibition commemorating the 70th anniversary of the shelling, which sadly increased support for Japanese-American internment camps.

The exhibit featured shell fragments, period clothing and uniforms, newspaper clippings, film coverage and more. In addition to commemorating the attack with a new historical marker at the site, the society hosted lectures and events throughout 2012.

Please support the American Oil & Gas Historical Society and this website with a donation.

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Chinese man sets world record for water jet pack backflips

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Oct. 19, 2016 at 4:26 PM



A Chinese man completed 29 backflips using a water jet pack within one minute, setting a new Guinness World Record. Liu He broke his own previous record of 27 complete 360 flips on 33 attempts at Bahe Lake in Xi'an.Screen capture/Guinness World Records/YouTube

XIAN, China, Oct. 19 (UPI) -- A man in China set a new Guinness World Record for most backflips with a water jet pack in one minute.

Liu He completed 29 backflips while using a water-propelled jet pack on Bahe Lake in Xi'an, topping his previous world record of 27.

A crowd watched from along the shore as Liu launched himself into the air using the water-propelled device to complete each flip.

Liu attempted 33 flips within the one minute time limit, as a Guinness World Records adjudicator confirmed that 29 of the flips were complete 360 rotations necessary for the record.

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Creepy LA: The Los Angeles Halloween Blog


The Parker twins and mother

The Jigsaw Ghost of Marion Parker

October 10, 2016

Los Angeles has had its share of gruesome killings: the severing of the Black Dahlia, Manson family mass murders, and the Menendez brothers double homicide among them. But the kidnapping and slaughter of a 12 year old Marion Parker may be the most horrifying L.A. crime of all.

On December 15, 1927, a man claiming to work with Perry M. Parker at a local bank walked into Mount Vernon Junior High School (now Johnie Cochrane Jr. Middle School) saying Parker had been in an automobile accident, and he needed to pick up Parker's daughter Marion to see him. School staff overlooked any suspicions, or that it was odd the man didn't also ask for Marion's twin sister Marjorie, and brought the girl to him.

Later that evening, the first of numerous ransom letters were sent to the Parker home at 1631 S. Wilton Place demanding cash for the release of his daughter, threatening to kill the girl if the demands weren't met. Two days later, the father evaded the police and agreed with the kidnapper to return his daughter in exchange for the money.



Shortly before 8pm, Parker arrived at the arranged meeting place on the street at 428 Manhattan Place, and a car pulled along side him. In the drivers seat was a man with a handkerchief covering his face, pointing a shotgun out the window. In the passenger seat, Parker could see Marion awake, looking forward. After Parker handed over the cash, the driver pulled forward a hundred feet, pushed Marion out of the car and drove off.

And then the real horror began.

Parker rushed to his daughter, and began screaming at what he found. Marion was motionless and wrapped in towels, her eyes were sewn wide open. Her arms had been cut off. Her corpse had been extensively mutilated.

A massive police hunt began immediately, with thousands of police officers, Secret Service agents, and even firemen throughout the state joining the hunt. Within a day police found the killer's car in Manhattan Beach, with Marion's arms and other body parts inside. By the end of the week a suspect was identified, captured in Oregon, and confessed on the train ride back down to Los Angeles.

William Hickman, a 19 year old who had been recently fired from the bank Perry Parker worked, was the culprit. A class valedictorian, he claimed to need the ransom money to pay for college. After kidnapping Marion, he brought her back to his apartment at 1170 Bellevue Ave. in Angelino Heights, where he had strangled her before dismembering her arms and legs.

On October 19, 1928, Hickman was executed at San Quentin State Prison, but not without complications: with the noose around his neck, he collapsed moments before the floor dropped beneath him, thus defeating the neck breaking snap that was intended. Instead, his feet kicked and buckled over a minute as he was strangled to death.

While the crime was gruesome, justice was served. But according to several sources, this does not mean the spirit of Marion Parker is at rest.

According to ghost lore expert Richard Carradine, the spirit of a young girl has been seen wandering the block near where Marion lived, often with an arm or leg missing, depending on who has seen her. He calls her the "Jigsaw Ghost."

In 1990, Cecilia Rasmussen with the L.A. Times reported that the owners of the home had been "hearing footsteps on the stairs and finding certain objects displaced at times, lights going on and off for no known reason. They said they felt they were sharing space with a benevolent, childlike and non-threatening spirit." Another article claims that a UCLA paranormal team confirmed paranormal activity in the home, and that another owner, who previously did not believe in ghosts, "said little things made him think that maybe, just maybe…. Someone (or something) kept turning the tea kettle off. And closing doors he had opened."

For a detailed account of this case, visit Cemetery Guide.

October 12 @ 9:15 pm - 11:45 pm

CREEPYLA

Creepy LA: The Los Angeles Halloween Blog

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Johann Weyer, Pseudomonarchia Daemonum

Twilit Grotto -- Esoteric Archives
Pseudomonarchia Daemonum (Liber officiorum spirituum)

Johann Weyer

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Which hours to conjure in.
The ritual.

Introduction by Joseph H. Peterson.

Johann Weyer (1515-1588) was a pioneer in the fields of medicine and psychiatry. He was also a firm believer in magic, and was in fact a student of one of the most famous occultists of all time, H. C. Agrippa. His *Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563) was basically a point-by-point rebuttal of the hateful witch hunter's handbook, *Malleus Maleficarum*. His book includes interesting reports of Faust, Agrippa, and Trithemius from a contemporary witness. Sigmund Freud calls the *Praestigiis Daemonum* one of the ten most significant books of all time.

As an appendix to this monumental text, Weyer added a catalog of demons which he called *Pseudomonarchia daemonum*. Weyer referred to his source manuscript as *Liber officiorum spirituum, seu Liber dictus Empto. Salomonis, de principibus & regibus dæmoniorum* ("Book of the offices of spirits, or the book called Empto. Salomonis concerning the princes and kings of the

demons") It includes variations in the names of many of the demons, showing that it had been redacted by the time Weyer obtained it, so it was evidently much older than 1563.

Unfortunately, Weyer in his note to the reader, admits to omitting many passages from the text "in order to render the whole work unusable" -- "lest anyone who is mildly curious, may dare to rashly imitate this proof of folly." For a closely-related text *Livre des esperitz* (The Book of Spirits), see Jean-Patrice Boudet's *Les who's who démonologiques de la Renaissance et leurs ancêtres médiévaux*. Boudet includes a detailed comparison of the two texts: Weyer's text seems to be missing text from the beginning, that would have had information on Lucifer, Beelzebub, Satan, and the four demons of the cardinal points. Moreover, the ritual at the end of the *Pseudomonarchia* is much shorter than *Liber Consecrationum*. (See Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, p. 8-10 and 256-276.) The text also internally has evidence of abbreviation, and in fact cites *De quattuor annulis* for the fuller ritual; the latter contains a "very complex ritual." (Ms. Florence BNC II III 214, fols. 26v-29v.)

A longer text of the *Offices of Spirits* can be found in manuscript V.b.23 in the Folger Shakespeare Library, on which see our new edition published as The Book of Oberon: A Sourcebook of Elizabethan Magic

It has long been recognized that the first book of the *Lemegeton*, *Goetia*, corresponds closely with Weyer's catalog of demons, though in Weyer's text there are no demonic seals, and the demons are invoked by a simple conjuration, not the elaborate ritual found in the *Lemegeton*.

The most striking difference between Weyer's text and the *Goetia* is the order of spirits. I see no explanation for the difference; it's almost as if a stack of cards got scrambled. There are also four additional spirits in the *Goetia* (number 3, and the last three).

Another anomaly may be of more significance: The fourth spirit in Weyer's text, Pruflas alias Bufas, was accidently left out of Reginald Scot's English translation (found in his highly rational 1584 *Discovery of Witchcraft*), or was already missing from the edition of Weyer used by Scot. It is also the only spirit from Weyer's list that is not found in the *Lemegeton*. If a specific edition can be found which introduced this defect, it may thus be possible to fix the date of the composition of the *Goetia* in its present form.

There is a list of thirteen spirits in Ad. 36674, fol. 65r. Compare also Sl. 3850 77r. The first six of which correspond with those in Weyer (but simplified). The remaining seven spirits are described therein in English so it is clear that they came from a different source. The order is Ad. 36674 is: Gomory, Zagan, Sytry alias Bytru, Eligor alias Abigor, Purson alias Curson, and Vual. Note these names are all closer to Scot's than Weyers, even though the descriptions are in Latin.

Another list is found in Sloane MS 3853 fol. 257r which contains ten spirits along with the four kings (Oriens, Paymon, Amaymon, and Egim).

An even briefer list in Wellcome MS 110 fol. 32r includes just two spirits: Viryn (cp Pursan/Curson/Bertin) and Gorsyer (cp Gorsyar/Gorsior).

There is also a list of spirits in Clm 849 which correspond closely with some of those described in Weyer, both in the names and the wording of the descriptions. They are:

	Corresponds with Weyer
Barbarus	6. Barbatos

Cason	8. Gusoyn
Otius	9. Botis, alibi Otis
Cvrson	11. Pursan, alias Curson
Alugor	12. Eligor, alias Abigor
Taob	36. Gaap, alias Tap
Volach	50. Volac
Gaeneron	51. Gomory
Tvueries	60. Cimeries
Hanni	61. Amy

The list in clm 849 continues with Svcax, who doesn't seem to have an equivalent in Weyer or Goetia:

> "Svcax magnus marchio est, et apparet in similitudine hominis. Wltum habet femineum. Videtur beniuolus. Multum mirabiliter dat amorem mulierum, et maxime omnium viduarum. Dat ad plenitudinem omnia genera li[n]gwarum. Facit hominem transire de regione in regionem velocissimo cursu. Habet sub se 23 legiones."
>
> (Sucax is a great marquis, and he appears in the likeness of a man, but has a woman's face. He appears to be kind. He most marvellously gives the love of women, and especially of those who are widowed. He gives all kinds of languages near fullness. He can swiftly transport a man from one country to another. He has 23 legions under him.)

See Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century (Magic in History)

1998, pp. 291-293. Latin text quoted by permission. Translation is mine.

Comparison of Weyer vs. Goetia:

WEYER	GOETIA	OTHER
1. Baël	1. Bael	Cp. Folger p. 81: 1 Baall
2. Agares	2. Agares	Cp. Folger p. 81: 2 Agaros
3. Marbas/Barbas	5. Marbas	Cp. Folger p. 81: 3 Barbas alias Corbas
4. Pruflas	(no equiv. in Goetia)	
5. Amon/Aamon	7. Amon	Cp. Folger p. 81: 11 Amon
6. Barbatos	8. Barbatos	Clm849: Barbarus; Folger p. 78: 51 Barbates or Barbares; Folger p. 81: 10 Barbais
7. Buer	10. Buer	
8. Gusoyn	11. Gusoin	Clm849: Cason
9. Botis, Otis	17. Botis	Clm849: Otius
10. Bathym [Bathin]/Marthim [Mathim]	18. Bathin	
11. Pursan [Purson], Curson	20. Purson	Clm849: Cvrson; Folger p. 75: 8. Fersone; Folger p. 85: 73 Corsone; Ad. 36674 64r 5: Purson alias Curson
12. Eligor/Abigor	15. Eligor	Clm849: Alugor; Folger p. 77: 35 Allogor; Folger p. 81: 6 Algor; Ad. 36674 fol 74: 8 Algor; Sl. 3853 257r: Algor;
13. Loray/Leraie/Oray	14. Leraye	
14. Valefar/Malephar	6. Valefar	

15. Morax. Foraii	21. Morax	Cp. Folger p. 78: 52 Goorox; Sl. 3853 257v: Corax
16. Ipes [Ipos], Ayperos [Ayporos]	22. Ipos	
17. Naberus [Naberius], Cerberus	24. Naberius	
18. Glasya labolas, Caacrinolaas, Caassimolar	25. Glasya Labolas	Cp. Folger p. 75: 19. Gloolas
19. Zepar	16. Zepar	
20. Byleth/Bileth	13. Beleth	Cp. Folger p. 82: 2 Bileth
21. Sytry	12. Sitri	
22. Paymon	9. Paimon	One of the 4 Kings. Cp. Folger p. 82: Paymon
23. Belial	(no equiv. in Goetia)	Cp. Folger p. 83: 1 Beliall
24. Bune	26. Bune	
25. Forneus	30. Forneus	
26. Roneve	27. Ronove	
27. Berith	28. Berith	Cp. Folger p. 82: 5 Berith
28. Astaroth	29. Astaroth	Cp. Folger p. 82: 3 Astaroth
29. Forras/Forcas	31. Foras	Cp. Folger p. 76: 20 Forcase; Folger p. 82: 7 Partas
30. Furfur	34. Furtur	
31. Marchocias	35. Marchosias	
32. Malphas	39. Malphas	Cp. Folger p. 82: 6 Mallapas
33. Vepar, Separ	42. Vepar	Cp. Folger p. 81: 5 Semper
34. Sabnac, Salmac	43. Sabnach	
35. Sydonay, Asmoday	32. Asmoday	Cp. Folger p. 82: 1 Asmoday
36. Gaap, Tap	33. Gaap	Clm849: Toab
37. Chax, Scox	44. Shax	
38. Pucel [Prucel]	49. Procel	
39. Furcas	50. Furcas	
40. Murmur	54. Murmur	
41. Caym	53. Caim	
42. Raum/Raym	40. Raum	
43. Halphas	38. Halphas	
44. Focalor	41. Focalor	
45. Vine	45. Vine	
46. Bifrons	46. Bifrons	
47. Gamygyn	4. Gamigin	
48. Zagam [Zagan]	61. Zagan	Cp. Folger p. 83: 7 Zagayne; Sl. 3850 77r and Ad. 36674: 2 Zagan
49. Orias	59. Orias	
50. Volac [Valac]	62. Valac	Clm849: Volach; Folger p. 76: 22 Coolor
51. Gomory	56. Gemory	Clm849: Gaeneron; Folger p. 77: 41 Gemyem; Ad. 36674 64r 1: Gomory
52. Decarabia, Carabia	69. Decarabia	

53. Amduscias	67. Amduscias	
54. Andras	63. Andras	
55. Androalphus [Andrealphus]	65. Andrealphus	
56. Oze [Ose]	57. Ose	Cp. Folger p. 82: 9 Oze
57. Aym, Haborym	23. Aim	
58. Orobas	55. Orobas	Cp. Folger p. 184: Orobas
59. Vapula	60. Vapula	
60. Cimeries	66. Cimeies	Clm849: Tvueries
61. Amy	58. Amy	Clm849: Hanni
62. Flauros	64. Flauros	
63. Balam	51. Balam	
64. Alocer [Allocer]	52. Alloces	
65. Zaleos [Saleos]	19. Saleos	
66. Wal [Vual]	47. Vual	Cp. Folger p. 83: 11 Ryall; Ad. 36674 65r: 6 Vual
67. Haagenti	48. Haagenti	
68. Phoenix	37. Phoenix	
69. Stolas	36. Stolas	

Comparison of Goetia* vs. Weyer:

GOETIA	WEYER	GOETIA	WEYER
1. Bael	1. Baël [Baell]	37. Phoenix	67. =
2. Agares	2. =	38. Halphas	42. =
3. **Vassago**		39. Malphas	31. =
4. Gamigin	46. Gamygyn	40. Raum	41. =, Raym
5. Marbas	3. =, Barbas	41. Focalor	43. =
6. Valefar	14. =, Malaphar	42. Vepar	32. =, Separ
7. Amon	5. =, Aamon	43. Sabnach	33. Sabnac, Salmac
8. Barbatos	6. =	44. Shax	36. Chax, Scox
9. Paimon	22 =	45. Vine	44. =
10. Buer	7. =	46. Bifrons	45. =
11. Gusoin	8. Gusoyn [Gusoin]	47. Vual	65. Wal [Vuall]
12. Sitri	21 Sytry / Bitru	48. Haagenti	66. =
13. Beleth	20. Byleth [Bileth]	49. Procel	37. Pucel [Prucel]
14. Leraye	13. Loray [Leraie], Oray	50. Furcas	38. =
15. Eligor	12. =, Abigor	51. Balam	62. =
16. Zepar	19. =	52. Alloces	63. Alocer [Allocer]
17. Botis	9. =, Otis	53. Caim	40. Caym
18. Bathin	10. Bathym [Bathin], Marthim [Mathim]	54. Murmur	39. =
19. Saleos	64. Zaleos [Saleos]	55. Orobas	57. =
20. Purson	11. Pursan [Purson], Curson	56. Gemory	50. Gomory
21. Morax	15. =, Foraii	57. Ose	55. Oze [Ose]
22. Ipos	16. Ipes [Ipos], Ayperos [Ayporos]	58. Amy	60. =
23. Aim	56. Aym, Haborym	59. Orias	48. =
24. Naberius	17. Naberus [Naberius], Cerberus	60. Vapula	58. =

25. Glasya Labolas	18. =, Caacrinolaas, Caassimolar	61. Zagan	47. Zagam [Zagan]
26. Bune	23 =	62. Valac	49. Volac [Valac]
27. Ronove	25 =	63. Andras	53. =
28. Berith	26 =	64. Flauros	61. =
29. Astaroth	27 =	65. Andrealphus	54. Androalphus [Andrealphus]
30. Forneus	24 =	66. Cimeies	59. Cimeries
31. Foras	28 = / Forcas	67. Amduscias	52. =
32. Asmoday	34. Sidonay, Asmoday	68. Belial	
33. Gaap	35. =, Tap	69. Decarabia	51. =, Carabia
34. Furtur	29. Furfur	**70. Seere**	
35. Marchosias	30. Marchocias	**71. Dantalion**	
36. Stolas	68. =	**72. Andromalius**	

Notes:

- "=" means that the name of the spirit in Weyer is spelled the same as in the *Goetia.*
- The fourth spirit in Weyer, Pruflas/Bufas is not found in the *Goetia*.
- The third spirit in the *Goetia*, Vassago, is not found in Weyer.
- The last three spirits in the *Goetia*, Seere, Dantalion, and Andromalius, are not found in Weyer.

PSEUDOMONARCHIA DÆMONUM.
Johann Weyer

Johann Wier, *Pseudomonarchia daemonum*. Salomons notes of conjuration

[Translation in Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584)]

O curas hominum, ô quantum est in rebus inane?

[Ah, human cares! Ah, how much futility in the world!. C. Lucilius, *Satires of Persius*]

<An inventarie of the names, shapes, powers, governement, and effects of divels and spirits, of their severall segniories and degrees: a strange discourse woorth the reading.>

LECTORIS.

TO THE READER.

Ne *Sathanicæ factionis monopolium usqueadeo porro delitescat, hanc Dæmonum Pseudomonarchiam, ex Acharonticorum Vasallorum archivo*

[Lest the monopoly of the Satanic faction remains hidden, I wanted to attach to the end of this book *On the Illusions of Demons* this "*Pseudo-*

subtractam, in hujus Operis de Dæmonum præstigiis calce annectere volui, ut effascinatorum id genus hominum, qui se magos jactitare non erubescunt, curiositas, præstigiæ, vanitas, dolus, imposturæ, deliria, mens elusa, & manifesta mendacia, quinimo non ferendæ blasphemiæ, omnium mortalium, qui in mediæ lucis splendore hallucinari nolint, oculis clarissimè appareant, hoc potissimum seculo scelestissimo, quo Christi regnum tam enormi impunitaque tyrannide impetitur ab iis qui Beliali palàm sacramentum præstitêre, stipendium etiam justum hauddubie recepturi: quibus & perditas has horas libenter dedico, si forte ex immensa Dei misericordia convertantur & vivant: quod ex animo iis precor, sitque felix & faustum. Ne autem curiosulus aliquis, fascino nimis detentus, hoc stultitiæ argumentum temere imitari audeat, voces hinc inde prætermisi studio, ut universa delinquendi occasio præcideretur. Inscribitur vero à maleferiato hoc hominum genere Officium spirituum, vel, Liber officiorum spirituum, seu, Liber dictus Empto. Salomonis, de principibus & regibus dæmoniorum, qui cogi possunt divina virtute & humana. At mihi nuncupabitur Pseudomonarchia Dæmonum.

monarchy of the demons," taken from the *archive of the Acharontic (i.e. hellish) vassals*. My intent is not to present before all people blasphemies of the bewitched kind of men who are not ashamed to call themselves magi, their curiosities, deceptions, vanity, tricks, impostures, deliriums, deceiving the mind, and obvious lies, but rather that they may be unwilling, when they can be seen in the bright light of day, to let their minds run wild (hallucinari),1 in this most infamous age, where the kingdom of Christ is so attacked by the immense and unpunished tyranny of those who openly perform the sacraments of Belial, who will no doubt soon receive their just reward. To whom I willingly and gladly dedicate these wasted hours, if perhaps through the immeasurable mercy of God, they might be turned around and live: This I beg them with all my soul, that they may be happy and fortunate. But lest anyone who is mildly curious, may dare to rashly imitate this proof of folly; I have omitted passages from this study, in order to render the whole work unusable. Truly this is entitled by an unstable2 kind of person, *The Offices of the Spirits*, or *The Book of the Offices of the Spirits*, or, the book called *Solomon's Apprentice*,3 concerning the princes and kings of the demons, which may be coerced with divine and human virtues. But (now) to my so-called *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*.]

Translation of this "note to the reader" by JHP.

1. Note play on words *lucis* (light) and hal*luci*nari (to wander in mind).

2. Lat. *maleferiato*. Cp. Mora p. 175.

3. Regarding "Empto. Salomonis": Later in the text the compiler refers to Solomon as his master, and it is tempting to read "Empto. Salomonis" as "empticiorum salomonis" (Solomon's apprentice) or some other form of "empticius"/apprentice.

PSEUDOMONARCHIA DÆMONUM.

Primus Rex, qui est de potestate Orientis, dicitur Baël, apparens tribus capitibus, quorum unum assimilatur bufoni alterum homini, tertium feli. Rauca loquitur voce, formator morum & insignis certator, reddit hominem invisibilem &

(1) <Baell>. Their first <and principall> king (which is of the power of the east) is called *Baëll* who when he is conjured up, appeareth with three heads; the first, like a tode; the second, like a man; the third, like a cat. He speaketh with a hoarse voice, he maketh a man go invisible [and wise], he hath under his

sapientem. Huic obediunt sexagintasex legiones.

obedience and rule sixtie and six legions of divels.

§ 2. Agares Dux primus sub potestate Orientis, apparet benevolus in senioris hominis forma, equitans in crocodilo, & in manu accipitrem portans. Cuncta linguarum genera docet optime: fugitantes reverti facit, & permanentes fugere: prælaturas & dignitates dimittit, & tripudiare facit spiritus terræ: & est de ordine Virtutum, sub sua potestate habens triginta & unam legiones.

(2) Agares. The first duke under the power of the east, <is named *Agares*,> he commeth up mildile [i.e. he appears willingly] in the likenes of a faire old man, riding upon a crocodile, and carrieng a hawke on his fist; hee teacheth presentlie all maner of toongs, he fetcheth backe all such as runne awaie, and maketh them runne that stand still; he overthroweth all dignities <supernaturall and temporall,> hee maketh earthquakes, [lit. "and makes spirits of the earth dance"] and is of the order of vertues, having under his regiment thirtie one legions.

§ 3. Marbas, alias Barbas, Præses magnus, se manifestans in fortissimi leonis specie, sed ab exorcista accitus humana induitur forma, & de occultis plene respondet, morbos invehit & tollit, promovet sapientiam artiumque mechanicarum cognitionem, homines adhæc in aliam mutat formã. Præest trigintasex legionibus.

(3) Marbas, alias Barbas is a great president, and appeareth in the forme of a mightie lion; but at the commandement of a conjuror commeth up in the likenes of a man, and answereth fullie as touching anie thing which is hidden or secret: he bringeth diseases, and cureth them, he promoteth wisedome, and the knowledge of mechanicall arts, or handicrafts; he changeth men into other shapes, and under his presidencie or gouvernement are thirtie six legions of divels conteined.

§ 4. Pruflas, alibi invenitur Bufas, magnus Princeps & Dux est, cujus mansio circa turrim Babylonis, & videtur in eo flamma foris, caput autem assimilatur magno nycticoraci. Autor est & promotor discordiarum, bellorum, rixarum & mendaciorum. Omnibus in locis non intromittatur. Ad quæsita respondet abunde. Sub sunt huic legiones vinginti sex, partim ex ordine Throni, partim Angelorum.

[(4) Pruflas, otherwise found as Bufas, is a great prince and duke, whose abode is around the Tower of Babylon, and there he is seen like a flame outside. His head however is like that of a great night hawk. He is the author and promoter of discord, war, quarrels, and falsehood. He may not be admitted into every place. He responds generously to your requests. Under him are twenty-six legions, partly of the order of Thrones, and partly of the order of Angels.]

§ 5. Amon vel Aamon Marchio magnus & potens, prodit in lupi forma caudam habens serpentinam, & flammam evomens. Hominis autem indutus speciem, caninos ostentat dentes, & caput magno nycticoraci simile. Princeps omnium fortissimus est, intelligens præterita & futura, hinc & gratiam concilians omnium amicorum & inimicorum. Quadraginta imperat legionibus.

(5) Amon, or *Aamon*, is a great and mightie marques, and commeth abroad in the likenes of a woolfe, having a serpents taile, <spetting out and breathing> [vomiting] flames of fier; when he putteth on the shape of a man, he sheweth out dogs teeth, and a great head like to a mightie <raven> [night hawk]; he is the strongest prince of all other, and understandeth of all things past and to come, he procureth favor, and reconcileth both freends and foes, and ruleth fourtie legions of divels.

§ 6. Barbatos magnus Comes & Dux, apparet in signo Sagittarii silvestris cum quatuor regibus tubas ferentibus. Intelligit cantus avium, canum latratus, mugitus boum & cunctorum animalium: thesauros item à magis & incantatoribus reconditos, detegit: Et est ex ordine Virtutum, partim Dominationum. Triginta præsidet legionibus. Novit præterita & futura: tam amicorum quam inimicorum animos conciliat.

(6) Barbatos, a great countie or earle, and also a duke, he appeareth in *Signo sagittarii sylvestris*,1 with foure kings, which bring companies and great troopes. He understandeth the singing of birds, the barking of dogs, the lowings of bullocks, and the voice of all living creatures. He detecteth treasures hidden by magicians and inchanters, and is of the order of vertues, which in part beare rule: he knoweth all things past, and to come, and reconcileth freends and powers; and governeth thirtie legions of divels by his authoritie.

1. *in signo sagittarii sylvestris*: In the image of a woodland archer.

§ 7. Buer Præses magnus conspicitur in signo *. Absolute docet philosophiam, practicam, ethica item & logica, & herbarum vires: Dat optimos familiares: Ægros sanitati restituere novit, maxime & homines. Quinquaginta legionum habet imperium.

(7) Buer is a great president, and is seene in this signe [*]; he absolutelie teacheth philosophie morall and naturall, and also logicke, and the vertue of herbes: he giveth the best familiars, he can heale all diseases, speciallie of men, and reigneth over fiftie legions.

§ 8. Gusoyn Dux magnus & fortis, apparet in forma zenophali. Explicate respondet & vere de præsentibus, præteritis, futuris & occultis. Amicoram & inimicorum gratiam reddit: Dignitates confert & honores conformat. Præest quadragintaquinque legionibus.

(8) Gusoin [Gusoyn] is a great duke, and a strong, appearing in the forme of a *Xenophilus*, he answereth all things, present, past, and to come, expounding all questions. He reconcileth freendship, and distributeth honours and dignities, and ruleth over fourtie [and five] legions of divels.

§ 9. Botis, alibi Otis, magnus Præses & Comes, Prodit in viperæ specie deterrima: Et siquando formam induit humanam dentes ostendit magnos & cornua duo, manu gladium acutum portans. Dat perfecte responsa vera de præsentius, præteritis, futuris & abstrusis. Tam amicos quam hostes conciliat. Sexaginta imperat legionibus.

(9) Botis, otherwise *Otis*, a great president and an earle he commeth foorth in the shape of an ouglie [*lit.* 'worst'] viper, and if he put on humane shape, he sheweth great teeth, and two hornes, carrieng a sharpe sword in his hand: he giveth answers of things present, past, and to come, and reconcileth friends, and foes, ruling sixtie legions.

§ 10. Bathym, alibi Marthim Dux magnus & fortis: Visitur constitutione viri fortissimi cum cauda serpentina, equo pallido insidens. Virtutes herbarum & lapidum pretiosorum intelligit. Cursu velocissimo hominem de regione in regionem transfert. Huic triginta subsunt legiones.

(10) Bathin [Bathym], sometimes called *Mathim [Marthim]*, a great duke and a strong, he is seene in the shape of a verie strong man, with a serpents taile, sitting on a pale horsse, understanding the vertues of hearbs and pretious stones, transferring men suddenlie from countrie to countrie, and ruleth thirtie legions of divels.

§ 11. Pursan, alias Curson, magnus Rex, prodit ut homo facie leonina, viperam portans ferocissimam, ursoque insidens, quem semper præcedunt tubæ. Callet præsentia, præterita & futura: Aperit occulta, thesauros detegit: Corpus humanum suscipit & aëreum. Vere respondet de rebus terrenis & occultis, de divinitate & mundi creatione: Familiares parit optimos: Cui parent vigintiduo legiones, partim de ordine Virtutum, partim ex ordine Throni.

(11) Purson [Pursan], alias Curson, a great king, he commeth foorth like a man with a lions face, carrieng a most cruell viper, and riding on a beare; and before him go alwaies trumpets, he knoweth <things hidden, and can tell> all things present, past, and to come: [he discloses hidden things,] he bewraieth treasure, he can take a bodie either humane or aierie; he answereth truelie of all things earthlie and secret, of the divinitie and creation of the world, and bringeth foorth the best familiars; and there obeie him two and twentie legions of divels, partlie of the order of vertues, & partlie of the order of thrones.

§ 12. Eligor, alias Abigor, Dux magnus, apparet ut miles pulcherrimus, lanceam, vexillum & sceptrum portans. Plene de occultis respondet atque bellis, & quomodo milites occurrere debeant: Futura scit, & gratiam apud omnes dominos

(12) Eligor, alias Abigor, is a great duke, and appeereth as a goodlie [handsome] knight, carrieng a lance, an ensigne, and a scepter: he answereth fullie of things hidden, and of warres, and how souldiers should meete: he knoweth things to come, and procureth the

& milites conciliat. Præsidet sexaginta legionibus.

favour of lords and knights, governing sixtie legions of divels.

§ 13. Loray, alias Oray, magnus Marchio, se ostendens in forma sagittarii pulcherrimi, pharetram & arcum gestantis: author existit omnium præliorum, & vulnera putrefacit quæ à sagittariis infliguntur, quos objicit optimos tribus diebus. Triginta dominatur legionibus.

(13) Leraie [Loray], alias Oray, a great marquesse, shewing himselfe in the likenesse of a galant [handsome] archer, carrieng a bowe and a quiver, he is author of all battels, he dooth putrifie all such wounds as are made with arrowes by archers, *Quos optimos objicit tribus diebus*, [who best drives away mobs from the days (?)] and he hath regiment over thirtie legions.

§ 14. Valefar, alias Malaphar, Dux est fortis, forma leonis prodiens & capite latronis. Familiaritatem parit suis, donec laqueo suspendantur. Decem præsidet legionibus.

(14) Valefar, alias Malephar [Malaphar], is a strong duke, comming foorth in the shape of a lion, and the head of a theefe [*or* "barking"], he is verie familiar with them to whom he maketh himself acquainted, till he hath brought them to the gallowes, and ruleth ten legions.

§ 15. Morax, alias Foraii, magnus Comes & Præses: Similis tauro visitur: Et si quando humanam faciem assumit, admirabilem in Astronomia & in omnibus artibus liberalibus reddit hominem: parit etiam famulos non malos & sapientes: novit & herbarum & pretiosorum lapidum potentiam. Imperat triginta sex legionibus.

(15) Morax, alias Foraii, a great earle and a president, he is seene like a bull, and if he take unto him a mans face, he maketh men wonderfull cunning in astronomie, & in all the liberall sciences: he giveth good familiars and wise, knowing the power & vertue of hearbs and stones which are pretious, and ruleth thirtie six legions.

§ 16. Ipes, alias Ayperos est magnus Comes & Princeps, apparens quidem specie angelica, interim leone obscurior & turpis, capite leonis, pedibus anserinis, cauda leporina. Præterita & futura novit: Redditque hominem ingeniosum & audacem. Legiones huic obediunt trigintasex.

(16) Ipos [Ipes], alias Ayporos [Ayperos], is a great earle and a prince, appeering in the shape of an angell, and yet indeed more obscure and filthie than a lion, with a lions head, a gooses feet, and a hares taile: he knoweth things to come and past, he maketh a man wittie, and bold, and hath under his jurisdiction thirtie six legions.

§ 17. Naberus, alias Cerberus, Marchio est fortis, forma corvi se

(17) Naberius [Naberus], alias Cerberus, is a valiant marquesse,

ostentans: Si quando loquitur, raucam edit vocem. Reddit & hominem amabilem & artium intelligentem, cum primis in Rhetoricis eximium. Prælaturarum & dignitatum jacturam parit. Novendecim legiones hunc audiunt.

shewing himselfe in the forme of a crowe, when he speaketh with a hoarse voice: he maketh a man amiable and cunning in all arts, and speciallie in rhetorike, he procureth the losse of prelacies and dignities: nineteene legions heare <and obeie> him.

§. 18. Glasya labolas, alias Caacrinolaas vel Caassimolar magnus Præses: Qui progreditur ut canis habens alas gryphi. Artium cognitionem dat, interim dux omnium homicidarum. Præsentia & futura intelligit. Tam amicorum quam inimicorum animos demeretur: Et hominem reddit invisibilem. Imperium habet triginta sex legionum.

(18) Glasya Labolas, alias Caacrinolaas, or *Caassimolar*, is a great president, who commeth foorth like a dog, and hath wings like a griffen, he giveth the knowledge of arts, and is the captaine of all mansleiers: he understandeth things present and to come, he gaineth the minds and love of freends and foes, he maketh a man go invisible, and hath the rule of six and thirtie legions.

§ 19. Zepar Dux magnus, apparens uti miles, inflammansque virorum amore mulieres, & quando ipsi jussum fuerit, earum formam in aliam transmutat, donec dilectis suis fruantur. Steriles quoque eas facit. Vigintisex huic parent legiones.

(19) Zepar is a great duke, appearing as a souldier, inflaming women with the loove of men, and when he is bidden he changeth their shape, untill they maie enjoie their beloved, he also maketh them barren, and six and twentie legions are at his obeie and commandement.

§ 20. Byleth Rex magnus & terribilis, in equo pallido equitans, quem præcedunt tubæ, symphoniæ, & cuncta Musicæ genera. Quum autem coram exorcista se ostentat, turgidus ira & furore videtur, ut decipiat. Exorcista vero tum sibi prudenter caveat: Atque ut fastum ei adimat, in manu suscipiat baculum corili, cum quo orientem & meridiem versus, foris juxta circulum manum extendet, facietque triangulum. Cæterum si manum non extendit, & intrare jubet, atque spirituum Vinculum ille renuerit, ad lectionem progrediatur exorcista: mox ingredietur item submissus, ibi stando & faciendo quodcunque

(20) Bileth [Byleth] is a great king and a terrible, riding on a pale horsse, before whome go trumpets, and all kind of melodious musicke. When he is called up by an exorcist, he appeareth rough [turgid] and furious, to deceive him. Then let the exorcist or conjuror take heed to himself; and to allaje his courage, let him hold a *hazell bat* [rod, staff, or stick] in his hand, wherewithall he must reach out toward the east and south, and make a *triangle* without besides the *circle*; but if he hold not out his hand unto him, and he bid him come in, and he still refuse the bond or chain of spirits; let the conjuror proceed to

jusserit exorcista ipsi Byleth regi, eritque securus. Si vero contumacior fuerit, nec primo jussu circulum ingredi voluerit, reddetur forte timidior exorcista: Vel si Vinculum spirituum minus habuerit, sciet haud dubie exorcista, malignos spiritus postea eum non verituros, at semper viliorem habituros. Item si ineptior sit locus triangulo deducendo juxta circulum, tunc vas vino plenum ponatur: Et intelliget exorcista certissimè, quum è domo sua egressus fuerit cum sociis suis, prædictum Byleth sibi fautorem fore, benevolum, & coram ipso submissum quando progredietur. Venientem vero exorcista benigne suscipiat, & de ipsius fastu glorietur: Propterea quoque eundem adorabit, quemadmodum alii reges, quia nihil dicit absque aliis principibus. Item si hic Byleth accitus fuerit ab aliquo exorcista, semper tenendus ad exorcistæ faciem annulus argenteus medii digiti manus sinistræ, quemadmodum pro Amaymone. Nec est prætermittenda dominatio & potestas tanti principis, quoniam nullus est sub potestate & dominatione exorcistæ alius, qui viros & mulieres in delirio detinet, donec exorcistæ voluntatem explerint: Et fuit ex ordine Potestatum, sperans se ad septimum Thronum rediturum, quod minus credibile. Imperat octogintaquinque legionibus.

reading, and by and by he will submit himselfe, and come in, and doo whatsoever the exorcist commandeth him, and he shalbe safe. If *Bileth* the king be more stubborne, and refuse to enter into the circle at the first call, and the conjuror shew himselfe fearfull, or if he have not the chaine of spirits, certeinelie he will never feare nor regard him after. Also, if the place be unapt for a triangle to be made without the circle, then set there a boll of wine, and the exorcist shall certeinlie knowe when he commeth out of his house, with his fellowes, and that the foresaid *Bileth* will be his helper, his friend, and obedient unto him when he commeth foorth. And when he commeth, let the exorcist receive him courteouslie, and glorifie him in his pride, and therfore he shall adore him as other kings doo, bicause he saith nothing without other princes. Also, if he be cited by an exorcist, alwaies a *silver ring* of the middle finger of the left hand must be held against the exorcists face, as they doo for *Amaimon*. And the dominion and power of so great a prince is not to be pretermitted; for there is none under the power & dominion of the conjuror, but he that deteineth both men and women in doting [*better:* "foolish" or "silly"] love, till the exorcist hath had his pleasure. He is of the orders of powers, hoping to returne to the seaventh throne, which is not altogether credible, and he ruleth eightie five legions.

§ 21. Sytry, alias Bitru, magnus Princeps, leopardi facie apparens, habensque alas velut gryphi. Quando autem humanam assumit formam, mire pulcher videtur. Incendit virum mulieris amore, mulierem vicissim alterius desiderio incitat. Jussus secreta libenter detegit feminarum, eas ridens

(21) Sitri [Sytry], alias Bitru, is a great prince, appeering with the face of a leopard, and having wings as a griffen: when he taketh humane shape, he is verie beautiful, he inflameth a man with a womans love, and also stirreth up women to love men, being commanded he willinglie deteineth [discloses] secrets of women, laughing at them and

ludificansque, ut se luxuriose nudent. Huic sexaginta legiones obsequuntur.

mocking them, to make them luxuriouslie naked, and there obeie him sixtie legions.

§ 22. Paymon obedit magis Lucifero quam alii reges. Lucifer hic intelligendus, qui in profunditate scientiæ suæ demersus, Deo assimilari voluit, & ob hanc arrogantiam in exitium projectus est. De quo dictum est: Omnis lapis pretiosus operimentum tuum [*Ezech*. 28]. Paymon autem cogitur virtute divina, ut se sistat coram exorcista: ubi hominis induit simulachrum, insidens dromedario, coronaque insignitus lucidissima, & vultu fœmineo. Hunc præcedit exercitus cum tubis & cimbalis bene sonantibus, atque omnibus instrumentis Musicis, primo cum ingenti clamore & rugitu apparens, sicut in Empto. Salomonis, & arte declaratur. Et si Paymon hic quandoque loquitur, ut minus ab exorcista intelligatur, propterea is non tepescat: sed ubi porrexerit illi primam chartam ut voto suo obsequatur, jubebit quoque ut distincte & aperte respondeat ad quæsita, & de universa philosophia & prudentia vel scientia, & de cæteris arcanis. Et si voles cognoscere dispositionem mundi, & qualis sit terra, aut quid eam sustineat in aqua, aut aliquid aliud, & quid sit abyssus, & ubi est ventus & unde veniat, abunde te docebit. Accedant & consecrationes tam de libationibus quam aliis. Confert hic dignitates & confirmationes. Resistentes sibi suo vinculo deprimit, & exorcistæ subjicit. Bonos comparat famulos, & artium omnium intellectum. Notandum, quod in advocando hunc Paymonem, Aquilonem versus exorcistam

(22) Paimon is more obedient in *Lucifer* than other kings are. *Lucifer* is heere to be understood he that was drowned in the depth of his knowledge: he would needs be like God, and for his arrogancie was throwne out into destruction, of whome it is said; Everie pretious stone is thy covering (*Ezech*. 88 [28.13].). *Paimon* is constrained by divine vertue to stand before the exorcist; where he putteth on the likenesse of a man: he sitteth on a beast called a dromedarie, which is a swift runner, and weareth a glorious crowne, and hath an effeminate countenance. There goeth before him an host of men with trumpets and well sounding cymbals, and all musicall instruments. At the first he appeereth with a great crie and roring, as in *Circulo [Empto.] Salomonis*, and in the art is declared. And if this *Paimon* speake sometime that the conjuror understand him not, let him not therefore be dismaied. But when he hath delivered him the first obligation to observe his desire, he must bid him also answer him distinctlie and plainelie to the questions he shall aske you, of all philosophie, wisedome, and science, and of all other secret things. And if you will knowe the disposition of the world, and what the earth is, or what holdeth it up in the water, or any other thing, or what is *Abyssus*, or where the wind is, or from whence it commeth, he will teach you aboundantlie. Consecrations also as well of sacrifices [offerings, libations] as otherwise may be reckoned. He giveth dignities and confirmations; he bindeth them that resist him in his owne chaines, and subjecteth them to the conjuror; he prepareth good familiars, and hath the

conspicere oporteat, quæ ibi hujus sit hospitium. Accitum vero intrepide constanterque suscipiat, interroget, & ab eo petat quicquid voluerit, nec dubie impetrabit. At ne creatorem oblivioni tradat, cavendum exorcistæ, propter ea quæ præmissa fuerunt de Paymone. Sunt qui dicunt, eum ex ordine Dominationum fuisse: sed aliis placet, ex ordine Cherubin. Hunc sequuntur legiones ducentæ, partim ex ordine Angelorum, partim Potestatum. Notandum adhæc, si Paymon solus fuerit citatus per aliquam libationem aut sacrificium, duo reges magni comitantur, scilicet Bebal & Abalam, & alii potentes. In hujus exercitu sunt vigintiquinque legiones: Quia spiritus his subjecti, non semper ipsis adsunt, nisi ut appareant, divina virtute compellantur.

understanding of all arts. Note, that at the calling up of him, the exorcist must looke towards the northwest, bicause there is his house. When he is called up, let the exorcist receive him constantlie without feare, let him aske what questions or demands he list, and no doubt he shall obteine the same of him. And the exorcist must beware he forget not the creator, for those things, which have beene rehearsed before of *Paimon*, some saie he is of the order of dominations; others saie, of the order of cherubim. There follow him two hundred legions, partlie of the order of angels, and partlie of potestates. Note that if *Paimon* be cited alone by an offering or sacrifice, two kings followe him; to wit, *Beball & Abalam*, & other potentates: in his host are twentie five legions, bicause the spirits subject to them are not alwaies with them, except they be compelled to appeere by divine vertue.

§ 23. Regem Belial aliqui dicunt statim post Luciferum fuisse creatum, ideoque sentiunt ipsum esse patrem & seductorem eorum qui ex Ordine ceciderunt. Cecidit enim prius inter alios digniores & sapientiores, qui præcedebant Michaëlem & alios cœlestes angelos, qui decrant. Quamvis autem Belial ipsos qui in terram dejecti fuerint, præcesserit: alios tamen qui in cœlo mansere, non antecessit. Cogitur hic divina virtute, cum accipit sacrificia, munera & holocausta, ut vicissim det immolantibus responsa vera: At per horam in veritate non perdurat, nisi potentia divina compellatur, ut dictum est. Angelicam assumit imagine in impense pulchram, in igneo curru sedens. Blande loquitur. Tribuit dignitates & prælaturas senatorias, gratiam item amicorum,

Some saie that the king *Beliall* was created immediatlie after *Lucifer*, and therefore they thinke that he was father and seducer of them which fell being of the orders. For he fell first among the worthier and wiser sort, which went before *Michael* and other heavenlie angels, which were lacking. Although *Beliall* went before all them that were throwne downe to the earth, yet he went not before them that tarried in heaven. This *Beliall* is constrained by divine venue, when he taketh sacrifices, gifts, and [burnt] offerings, that he againe may give unto the offerers true answers. But he tarrieth not one houre in the truth, except he be constrained by the divine power, as is said. He taketh the forme of a beautifull angell, sitting in a firie chariot; he speaketh faire, he distributeth preferments of senatorship, and the favour of friends, and excellent familiars: he hath rule over eightie

& optimos famulos. Imperium habet octoginta legionum, ex ordine partim Virtutum, partim Angelorum. Forma exorcistæ invenitur in Vinculo Spirituum. Observandum exorcistæ, hunc Belial in omnibus succurrere suis subditis: Si autem se submittere noluerit, Vinculum Spirituum legatur, quo sapientissimus Salomon eos cum suis legionibus in vase vitreo relegavit: Et relegati cum omnibus legionibus fuere septuagintaduo reges, quorum primus erat Bileth, secundus Belial, deinde Asmoday, & circirer [*circiter] mille millia legionum. Illud proculdubio à magistro Salomone didiciste me fateor: Sed causam relegationis me non docuit, crediderim tamen propter arrogantiam ipsius Belial. Sunt quidam necromantici, qui asserunt, ipsum Salomonem quodam die astutia cujusdam mulieris seductum, orando se inclinasse versus simulacrum Belial nomine. Quod tamen fidem non meretur: Sed potius sentiendum, ut dictum est, propter superbiam & arrogantiam, relegatos esse in magno vase, projectos in Babylone in puteum grandem valde. Enimvero prudentissimus Salomon divina potentia suas exequebatur operationes, quæ etiam nunquam eum destituit: propterea simulachrum non adorasse ipsum sentiendum est, alioqui divina virtute spiritus cogere nequivisset. Hic autem Belial cum tribus regibus in puteo fuit. At Babylonienses ad hæc exhorrescentes, rati se thesaurum amplum in puteo inventuros, unanimi consilio in puteum descenderunt, detegeruntque & confregere vas, unde mox egressi captivi, in proprium locum porto sunt rejecti. Belial vero ingressus quoddam simulachrum, dabat

legions, partlie of the order of vertues, partlie of angels; he is found in the forme of an exorcist in the bonds of spirits. The exorcist must consider, that this *Beliall* doth in everie thing assist his subjects. If he will not submit himselfe, let the bond of spirits be read: the spirits chaine is sent for him, wherewith wise *Salomon* gathered them togither with their legions in a brasen vessell, where were inclosed among all the legions seventie two kings, of whome the cheefe was *Bileth*, the second was *Beliall*, the third *Asmoday*, and above a thousand thousand legions. Without doubt (I must confesse) I learned this of my maister *Salomon*; but he told me not why he gathered them together, and shut them up so: but I beleeve it was for the pride of this *Beliall*. Certeine nigromancers doo saie, that *Salomon*, being on a certeine daie seduced by the craft of a certeine woman, inclined himselfe to praie before the same idoll, *Beliall* by name: which is not credible. And therefore we must rather thinke (as it is said) that they were gathered together in that great brasen vessell for pride and arrogancie, and throwne into a deepe lake or hole in *Babylon*. For wise *Salomon* did accomplish his workes by the divine power, which never forsooke him. And therefore we must thinke he worshipped not the image *Beliall*; for then he could not have constrained the spirits by divine vertue: for this *Beliall*, with three kings were in the lake. But the Babylonians woondering at the matter, supposed that they should find therein a great quantitie of treasure, and therefore with one consent went downe into the lake, and uncovered and brake the vessell, out of the which immediatlie flew the capteine divels, and were delivered to their former and proper places. But this Beliall entred into a certeine image, and there gave answer to them that offered

responsa sibi immolantibus & sacrificantibus, ut testatur Tocz in dictis suis: Et Babylonienses adorantes sacrificaverunt eidem.

and sacrificed unto him: as *Tocz.* in his sentences reporteth, and the Babylonians did worship and sacrifice thereunto.

§ 24. Bune Dux magnus & fortis, apparet ut draco, tribus capitibus, tertium vero assimilatur homini. Muta loquitur voce: Mortuos locum mutare facit, & dæmones supra defunctorum sepulchra congregari: omnimodo hominem locupletat, redditque loquacem & sapientem: ad quæsita vere respondet. Huic legiones parent triginta.

(23) Bune is a great and a strong Duke, he appeareth as a dragon with three heads, the third whereof is like to a man; he speaketh with a divine voice, he maketh the dead to change their place, and divels to assemble upon the sepulchers of the dead: he greatlie inricheth a man, and maketh him eloquent and wise, answering trulie to all demands, and thirtie legions obeie him.

§ 25. Forneus magnus Marchio, similis monstro marino, reddit hominem in Rhetoricis admirabilem, optima fama & linguarum peritia ornat, tam amicis quam inimicis gratum facit. Subsunt huic vigintinovem legiones, ex ordine partim Thronorum, partim Angelorum.

(24) Forneus is a great marquesse, like unto a monster of the sea, he maketh men woondeffull in rhetorike, he adorneth a man with a good name, and the knowledge of toongs, and maketh one beloved as well of foes as freends: there are under him nine and twentie legions, of the order partlie of thrones, and partlie of angels.

§ 26. Roneve Marchio & Comes, assimilatur monstro. Singularem in Rhetoricis intelligcntiam confert, famulos item fidos, linguarum cognitionem, amicorum & inimicorum favorem. Huic obediunt legiones novendecim.

(25) Ronove [Roneve] a marquesse and an earle, he is resembled to a monster, he bringeth singular understanding in rhetorike, faithfull servants, knowledge of toongs, favour of freends and foes; and nineteene legions obeie him.

§ 27. Berith Dux magnus & terribilis: tribus nuncupatur nominibus, à quibusdam Beal, à Judæis Berith, à necromanticis Bolfri. Prodit ut miles ruber cum vestitu rubro, & equo ejusdem coloris coronaque ornatus. Vere de præsentibus, præteritis & futuris respondet. Virtute divina per annulum magicæ artis ad horam scilicet cogitur. Mendax etiam est. In

(26) Berith is a great and a terrible duke, and hath three names. Of some he is called *Beall*; of the Jewes *Berithi [Berith]*; of Nigromancers *Bolfry [Bolfri]*: he commeth foorth as a red souldier, with red clothing, and upon a horsse of that colour, and a crowne on his head. He answereth trulie of things present, past, and to come. He is compelled at a certeine houre, through divine vertue, by a ring of art magicke. He is also a

aurum cuncta metallorum genera mutat. Dignitatibus ornat easdemque confirmat: Claram subtilemque edit vocem. Viginti sex legiones huic subsunt.

lier, he turneth all mettals into gold, he adorneth a man with dignities, and confirmeth them, he speaketh with a cleare and a subtill voice, and six and twentie legions are under him.

§ 28. Astaroth Dux magnus & fortis, prodiens angelica specie turpissima, insidensque in dracone infernali, & viperam portans manu dextra. Vere respondet de præteritis, præsentibus, futuris & occultis. Libenter de spirituum creatore, & eorundem lapsu loquitur, quomodo peccaverint & ceciderint. Se spontè non prolapsum esse dicit. Reddit hominem mire eruditum in artibus liberalibus. Quadraginta legionibus imperat. Ab hoc quilibet exorcista caveat, ne prope nimis cum admittat, ob fœtorem intolerabilem quem expirat. Itaque annulum argenteum magicum in manu sua juxta faciem teneat, quo se ab injuria facile tuebitur.

(27) Astaroth is a great and a strong duke, comming foorth in the shape of a fowle angell, sitting upon an infernall dragon, and carrieng on his right hand a viper: he answereth trulie to matters present, past, and to come, and also of all secrets. He talketh willinglie of the creator of spirits, and of their fall, and how they sinned and fell: he saith he fell not of his owne accord. He maketh a man woonderfull learned in the liberall sciences, he ruleth fourtie legions. Let everie exorcist take heed, that he admit him not too neere him, bicause of his stinking breath [*lit.* "because of the intolerable stench which he exhales"]. And therefore let the conjuror hold neere to his face a magicall [silver] ring, and that shall defend him.

§ 29. Forras vel Forcas magnus Præses est: visitur forma viri fortissimi, & in humana specie vires herbarum & lapidum preciosorum intelligit. Plene docet Logica, Ethica & eorundem partes. Reddit hominem invisibilem, ingeniosum, loquacem & vivacem: Amissa recuperat, thesauros detegit. Dominium viginti novem legionum habet.

(28) Foras [Forras], alias Forcas is a great president, and is seene in the forme of a strong man, and in humane shape, he understandeth the vertue of hearbs and pretious stones: he teacheth fullie logicke, ethicke, and their parts: he maketh a man invisible, wittie, eloquent, and to live long; he recovereth things lost, and discovereth [discloses] treasures, and is lord over nine and twentie legions.

§ 30. Furfur Comes est magnus, apparens ut cervus cauda flammea. In omnibus mentitur, nisi in triangulum intro ducatur. Jussus angelicam assumit imaginem. Rauca loquitur voce: amorem inter virum & mulierem libenter conciliat: novit & concitare fulgura,

(29) Furfur is a great earle, appearing as an hart, with a firie taile, he lieth in everie thing, except he be brought up within a triangle; being bidden, he taketh angelicall forme, he speaketh with a hoarse voice, and willinglie maketh love betweene man and wife [*or simply* "woman"]; he raiseth thunders

coruscationes & tonitrua in iis partibus ubi jussum fuerit. De occultis & divinis rebus bene respondet. Imperat legionibus vigintisex.

and lightnings, and blasts. Where he is commanded, he answereth well, both of secret and also of divine things, and hath rule and dominion over six and twentie legions.

§ 31. Marchocias magnus Marchio est. Se ostentat specie lupæ ferocissimæ cum alis gryphi, cauda serpentina, & ex ore nescio quid evomens. Quum hominis imaginem induit, pugnator est optimus. Ad quæsita vere respondet: fidelis in cunctis exorcistæ mandatis. Fuit ordinis Dominationum. Huic subjacent legiones triginta. Sperat se post mille ducentos annos ad septimum Thronum reversurum: sed ea spe falsus est.

(30) Marchosias [Marchocias] is a great marquesse, he sheweth himselfe in the shape of a cruell shee woolfe, with a griphens wings, with a serpents taile, and spetting I cannot tell what out of his mouth. When he is in a mans shape, he is an excellent fighter, he answereth all questions trulie, he is faithfull in all the conjurors businesse [commands], he was of the order of dominations, under him are thirtie legions: he hopeth after 1200. yeares to returne to the seventh throne, but he is deceived in that hope.

§ 32. Malphas magnus Præses, conspicitur corvo similis: sed hominis idolum indutus rauca fatur voce. Domos & turres ingentes mire extruit, & obvios cito facit artifices maximos: Hostium vero ædes & turres dejicit. Famulos suppeditat non malos. Sacrificia libenter suscipit, at sacrificatores omnes fallit. Quadraginta huic parent legiones.

(31) Malphas is a great president, he is seene like a crowe, but being cloathed with humane image, speaketh with a hoarse voice, be buildeth houses and high towres wonderfullie, and quicklie bringeth artificers togither, he throweth downe also the enimies edifications, he helpeth to good familiars, he receiveth sacrifices willinglie, but he deceiveth all the sacrificers, there obeie him fourtie legions.

§ 33. Vepar, alias Separ, Dux magnus & fortis: Similis syreni: Ductor est aquarum & navium armis onustarum. Ut mare jussu magistri turgidum navibusque plenum appareat, efficit: contra inimicos exorcistæ per dies tres vulneribus putrescentibus vermesque producentibus homines inficit, à quibus tamen negotio absoluto sanantur omnes. Imperat legionibus vigintinovem.

(32) Vepar, alias Separ, a great duke and a strong, he is like a mermaid, he is the guide of the waters, and of ships laden with armour; he bringeth to passe (at the commandement of his master) that the sea shalbe rough and stormie, and shall appeare full of shippes; he killeth men in three daies, with putrifieng their wounds, and producing maggots into them; howbeit, they maie be all healed with diligence, he ruleth nine and twentie legions.

§34. Sabnac, alias Salmac, Marchio magnus & fortis: prodit ut miles armatus, capite leonis, in pallido equo infidens. Hominis formam transmutat mire: Turres magnas armis plenas ædificat, item castra & civitates. Triginta dies ex mandato exorcistæ homini vulnera putrida & verminantia infligit. Familiares conciliat bonos: dominium exercens quinquaginta legionum.

(33) Sabnacke [Sabnac], alias Salmac, is a great marquesse and a strong, he commeth foorth as an armed soldier with a lions head, sitting on a pale horsse, he dooth marvelouslie change mans forme and favor, he buildeth high towres full of weapons, and also castels and cities; he inflicteth men thirtie daies with wounds both rotten and full of maggots, at the exorcists commandement, he provideth good familiars, and hath dominion over fiftie legions.

§ 35. Sydonay, alias Asmoday, Rex magnus, fortis & potens: Visitur tribus capitibus, quorum primum assimilatur capiti tauri, alterum hominis, tertium arietis. Cauda ejus serpentina, ex ore flammam eructat, pedes anserini. Super dracone infernali sedet, in manu lanceam & vexillum portans. Præcedit alios qui sub potestate Amaymonis sunt. Cum hujus officia exercet exorcista, fit fortis, cautus & in pedibus stans: si vero coopertus fuerit, ut in omnibus detegatur, efficiet: Quod si non fecerit exorcista, ab Amaymone in cunctis decipietur: Sed mox cum ipsum in prædicta forma conspicit, appellabit illum nomine suo, inquiens: Tu vero es Asmoday. Ipse non negabit: Et mox ad terram. Dat annulum virtutum: Docet absolute Geometriam, Arithmeticam, Astronomiam, Mechanicam: Ad interrogata plene & vere respondet: Hominem reddit invisibilem: Loca thesaurorum ostendit & custodit, si fuerit de legionibus Amaymonis. In sua potestate legiones septuaginta duas habet.

(34) Sidonay [Sydonay], alias Asmoday, a great king, strong and mightie, he is seene with three heads, whereof the first is like a bull, the second like a man, the third like a ram, he hath a serpents taile, he belcheth flames out of his mouth, he hath feete like a goose, he sitteth on an infernall dragon, he carrieth a lance and a flag in his hand, he goeth before others, which are under the power of *Amaymon*. When the conjuror exerciseth this office, let him be abroad [brave], let him be warie [courageous] and standing on his feete; <if his cap be on his head> [! if he is afraid he will be overwhelmed], he will cause all his dooings to be bewraied [divulged], which if he doo not, the exorcist shalbe deceived by *Amaymon* in everie thing. But so soone as he seeth him in the forme aforesaid, he shall call him by his name, saieng; Thou art *Asmoday*; he will not denie it, and by and by he boweth downe to the ground; he giveth the ring of venues, he absolutelie teacheth geometrie, arythmetike, astronomie, and handicrafts [mechanics]. To all demands he answereth fullie and trulie, he maketh a man invisible, he sheweth the places where treasure lieth, and gardeth it, if it be among the legions of *Amaymon*, he hath under his power seventie two legions.

§ 36. Gaap, alias Tap, Præses magnus & Princeps: in signo Meridiei apparet: sed quum humanam assumit faciem [Clm 849, fol 66r: Apparet in signo medici cum suscipit figuram humanam; [est] doctor opti[m]us mulierum, et facit ardere in amorem virorum], ductor est præcipuorum quatuor regum, tam potens ut Byleth. Extiterunt autem quidam necromantici, qui huic libamina & holocausta obtulere, & ut eundem evocarent, artem exercuere, dicentes sapientissimum Salomonem eam composuisse, quod falsum est: imo fuit Cham filius Noë, qui primus post diluvium cœpit malignos invocare spiritus, invocavit autem Byleth, & composuit artem in suo nomine, & librum, qui multis mathematicis est cognitus. Fiebant autem holocausta, libamina, munera, & multa nefaria, quæ operabantur exorcistæ admistis sanctissimis Dei nominibus, quæ in eadem arte sparsim exprimuntur. Epistola vero de iis nominibus est conscripta à Salomone, uti & scribunt Helias Hierosolymitanus & Heliseus. Notandum, si aliquis exorcista habuerit artem Beleth, nec ipsum coram se sistere possit aut videre, nisi per artem: Quomodo autem eundem continere oporteat, non est explicandum, quum sit nefandum, & nihil à Salomone de ejus dignitate & officio didicerim, hoc tamen non silebo, ipsum reddere hominem admirabilem in philosophia & artibus omnibus liberalibus. Facit ad amorem, odium, invisibilitatem & consecrationem eorum quæ sunt de dominatione Amaymonis: Et de potestate alterius exorcistæ tradit familiares, & vera perfecte responsa de præsentibus, præteritis & futuris. Velocissimo transcursu in varias

(35) Gaap, alias Tap, a great president and a prince, he appeareth in a meridionall signe, and when he taketh humane shape [Clm 849 reads: He appears in the form of a doctor when he takes on a human form. He is the most excellent doctor of women, and he makes them burn with love for men.] he is the guide of the foure principall kings, as mightie as *Bileth*. There were certeine necromancers that offered sacrifices and burnt offerings unto him; and to call him up, they exercised an art, saieng that *Salomon* the wise made it. Which is false: for it was rather *Cham*, the sonne of *Noah*, who after the floud began first to invocate wicked spirits. He invocated *Bileth*, and made an art in his name, and a booke which is knowne to manie mathematicians. There were burnt offerings and sacrifices made, and gifts given, and much wickednes wrought by the exorcists, who mingled therewithall the holie names of God, the which in that art are everie where expressed. Marie [Certainly] there is an epistle of those names written by *Salomon*, as also write *Helias Hierosolymitanus* and *Helisæus*. It is to be noted, that if anie exorcist have the art of *Bileth*, and cannot make him stand before him, nor see him, I may not bewraie how and declare the meanes to conteine him, bicause it is abhomination, and for that I have learned nothing from *Salomon* of his dignitie and office. But yet I will not hide this; to wit, that he maketh a man woonderfull in philosophie and all the liberall sciences: he maketh love, hatred, insensibilitie, invisibilitie, consecration, and consecration of those things that are belonging unto the domination of *Amaymon*, and delivereth familiars out of the possession of other conjurors, answering truly and perfectly of things present, past, & to come, &

regiones traducit hominem. Sexagintasex præest legionibus, & fuit de Potestatum ordine.

transferreth men most speedilie into other nations, he ruleth sixtie six legions, & was of the order of potestats.

§ 37. Chax, alias Scox, Dux est & Marchio magnus: Similis ciconiæ rauca voce & subtili. Mirabiliter aufert visum, auditum & intellectum jussu exorcistæ: aufert pecuniam ex qualibet domo regia, & reportat post mille ducentos annos, si jussus fuerit: abripit & equos. Fidelis esse in omnibus mandatis putatur: ac licet se obsecuturum exorcistæ promittat, non tamen in omnibus facit. Mendax est, nisi in triangulum introducatur: introductus autem loquitur de rebus divinis & reconditis thesauris, qui à malignis spiritibus non custodiuntur. Promittit insuper se collaturum optimos famulos, qui accepti sunt, si non fuerint deceptores. Huic subjacent legiones triginta.

(36) Shax [Chax], alias Scox, is a darke and a great marquesse, like unto a storke, with a hoarse and subtill voice: he dooth marvellouslie take awaie the sight, hearing and understanding of anie man, at the commandement of the conjuror: he taketh awaie monie out of everie kings house, and carrieth it backe after 1200. yeares, if he be commanded, he is a horssestealer, he is thought to be faithfull in all commandements: and although he promise to be obedient to the conjuror in all things; yet is he not so, he is a lier, except he be brought into a triangle, and there he speaketh divinelie, and telleth of things which are hidden, and not kept of wicked spirits, he promiseth good familiars, which are accepted if they be not deceivers, he hath thirtie legions.

§ 38. Pucel Dux magnus & fortis, apparet in specie angelica, sed obscura valde: loquitur de occultis: docet Geometriam & omnes artes liberales: sonitus facit ingentes, & sonare aquas ubi non sunt, easdem & calefacit & harum balnea recuperandæ sanitati servientia certis temporibus, distemperat jussu exorcistæ. Fuit de ordine Potestatum, habetque in sua potestate legiones quadragintaocto.

(37) Procell is a great and a strong duke, appearing in the shape of an angell, but speaketh verie darklie of things hidden, he teacheth geometrie and all the liberall arts, he maketh great noises, and causeth the waters to rore, where are none, he warmeth waters, and distempereth bathes at certeine times, as the exorcist appointeth him, he was of the order of potestats, and hath fourtie eight legions under his power.

§ [39] 38 [sic]. Furcas miles est: prodit similitudine sævi hominis cum longa barba, & capillitio cano. In equo pallido insidet, portans in manu telum acutum. Docet perfecte practicam, philosophiam, rhetoricam, logicam, chiromantiam,

(38) Furcas is a knight and commeth foorth in the similitude of a cruell man, with a long beard and a hoarie head, he sitteth on a pale horsse, carrieng in his hand a sharpe weapon [dart or spear], he perfectlie teacheth practike philosophie, rhetorike, logike,

astronomiam, piromantiam, & earum partes. Huic parent viginti legiones.

astronomie, chiromancie, pyromancie, and their parts: there obeie him twentie legions.

§ [40] 39. Murmur magnus Dux & Comes: Apparet militis forma, equitans in vulture, & ducali corona comptus. Hunc præcedunt duo ministri tubis magnis: Philosophiam absolute docet. Cogit animas coram exorcista apparere, ut interrogatæ respondeant ad ipsius quæsita. Fuit de ordine partim Thronorum, partim Angelorum.

(39) Murmur is a great duke and an earle, appearing in the shape of a souldier, riding on a griphen [vulture], with a dukes crowne on his head; there go before him two of his ministers, with great trumpets, he teacheth philosophie absolutelie, he constraineth soules to come before the exorcist, to answer what he shall aske them, he was of the order partlie of thrones, and partlie of angels, <and ruleth thirtie legions.>

§ [41] 40. Caym magnus Præses, formam assumens merulæ: at quum hominem induit, respondet in favilla ardente, ferens in manu glagium [sic gladium] acutissimum. Præ cæteris sapienter argumentari facit: Tribuit intellectum omnium volatilium, mugitus boum, latratus canum, & sonitus aquarum: de futuris optime respondet. Fuit ex ordine Angelorum. Præsidet legionibus triginta.

(40) Caim [Caym] is a great president, taking the forme of a thrush [blackbird], but when he putteth on man's shape, he answereth in burning ashes, carrieng in his hand a most sharpe swoord, he maketh the best disputers, he giveth men the understanding of all birds, of the lowing of bullocks, and barking of dogs, and also of the sound and noise of waters, he answereth best of things to come, he was of the order of angels, and ruleth thirtie legions of divels.

§ [42] 41. Raum vel Raym Comes est magnus: Ut corvus visitur: Sed cum assumit humanam faciem, si ab exorcista jussus fuerit, mirè ex regis domo vel alia suffuratur, & ad locum sibi designatum transfert. Civitates destruit: Dignitatum despectum ingerit. Novit præsentia, præterita & futura. Favorem tam hostium quam amicorum conciliat. Fuit ex ordine Thronorum. Præest legionibus triginta.

(41) Raum, or *Raim* is a great earle, he is seene as a crowe, but when he putteth on humane shape, at the commandement of the exorcist, he stealeth woonderfullie out of the kings house, and carrieth it whether he is assigned, he destroieth cities, and hath great despite unto dignities, he knoweth things present, past, and to come, and reconcileth freends and foes, he was of the order of thrones, and governeth thirtie legions.

§ [43] 42. Halphas Comes magnus, prodit similis ciconiæ rauca voce. Insigniter ædificat oppida ampla armis plena: Bellum movet, &

(42) Halphas is a great earle, and commeth abroad like a storke, with a hoarse voice, he notablie buildeth up townes full of munition and weapons, he

jussus, homines bellicosos ad designatum locum mittit obviam. Subsunt huic viginti sex legiones.

sendeth men of warre to places appointed, and hath under him six and twentie legions.

§ [44] 43. Focalor Dux magnus, prodit velut homo, habens alas gryphi forma. Accepta humana figura, interficit homines & in aquis submergit. Imperat mari & vento, navesque bellicas subvertit. Notandum omni exorcistæ, si huic mandetur, ne homines lædat, libenter obsequitur. Sperat se post mille annos reversurum ad septimum Thronum, sed fallitur. Triginta legionibus imperat.

(43) Focalor is a great duke comming foorth as a man, with wings like a griphen, he killeth men, and drowneth them in the waters, and overturneth ships of warre, commanding and ruling both winds and seas. And let the conjuror note, that if he bid him hurt no man, he willinglie consenteth thereto: he hopeth after 1000. yeares to returne to the seventh throne, but he is deceived, he hath three legions.

§ [45] 44. Vine magnus Rex & Comes: se ostentat ut leo in equo nigro insidens, portansque viperam in manu. Amplas turres libenter ædificat: Lapideas domus extruit, rivos reddit turgidos: Ad exorcistæ mandatum respondet de occultis, maleficis, præsentibus, præteritis & futuris.

(44) Vine is a great king and an earle, he showeth himselfe as a lion, riding on a blacke horsse, and carrieth a viper in his hand, he gladlie buildeth large towres, he throweth downe stone walles, and maketh waters rough. At the commandement of the exorcist he answereth of things hidden, of witches, and of things present, past, and to come.

§ [46] 45. Bifrons, monstri similitudine conspicitur. Ubi humanam assumit imaginem, reddit hominem in Astrologia mirabilem, planetarum mansiones absolute docens, idem præstat in Geometria, & mensuris aliis. Vires herbarum, lapidum pretiosorum & lignorum intelligit. Corpora mortuorum de loco ad locum transmutat: Candelas super defunctorum sepulchra inflammare videtur. Huic subjacent vinginti sex legiones.

(45) Bifrons is seene in the similitude of a monster, when he taketh the image of a man, he maketh one woonderfull cunning in astrologie, absolutelie declaring the mansions of the planets, he dooth the like in geometrie, and other admesurements, he perfectlie understandeth the strength and vertue of hearbs, pretious stones, and woods, he changeth dead bodies from place to place, he seemeth to light candles upon the sepulchres of the dead, and hath under him six and twentie legions.

§ [47] 46. Gamygyn magnus Marchio: in forma equi parvi visitur: at ubi hominis simulachrum assumit, raucam edit vocem, de omnibus

(46) Gamigin [Gamygyn] is a great marquesse, and is seene in the forme of a little horsse, when he taketh humane shape he speaketh with a hoarse voice,

artibus liberalibus differens: efficit quoque, ut coram exorcista conveniant animæ in mari exeuntes, & quæ degunt in purgatorio (quod dicitur Cartagra, id est, afflictio animarum) & corpora aërea suscipiunt, apparentque evidenter, & ad interrogata respondent. Permanet apud exorcistam, donec ipsius votum expleverit. Triginta legiones in sua habet potestate.

disputing of all liberall sciences; he bringeth also to passe, that the soules, which are drowned in the sea, or which dwell in purgatorie (which is called *Cartagra*, that is, affliction of soules) shall take aierie bodies, and evidentlie appeare and answer to interrogatories at the conjurors commandement; he tarrieth with the exorcist, untill he have accomplished his desire, and hath thirtie legions under him.

§ [48] 47. Zagam magnus Rex & Præses: ut taurus prodit cum alis ad modum gryphi: sed assumpta hominis forma, reddit hominem ingeniosum: transmutat cuncta metallorum genera in monetas illius ditionis, & aquam in vinum, & è diverso: sanguinem quoque in oleum, & contra: & stultum in sapientem. Præest triginta tribus legionibus.

(47) Zagan [Zagam] is a great king and a president, he commeth abroad like a bull, with griphens wings, but when he taketh humane shape, he maketh men wittie, he turneth all mettals into the coine of that dominion, and turneth water into wine, and wine into water, he also turneth bloud into <wine> [oil], & <wine> [oil] into bloud, & a foole into a wise man, he is head of thirtie and three legions.

§ [49] 48. Orias Marchio magnus, visitur ut leo, in equo fortissimo equitans, cauda serpentina: in dextera portat duos grandes serpentes etiam exibilantes. Callet planetarum mansiones, & vires sidereas perfecte docet. Transmutat homines: confert dignitates, prælaturas & confirmationes: Item amicorum & hostium favorem. Præsidet legionibus triginta.

(48) Orias is a great marquesse, and is seene as a lion riding on a strong horsse, with a serpents taile, and carrieth in his right hand two great serpents hissing, he knoweth the mansion of planets and perfectlie teacheth the vertues of the starres, he transformeth men, he giveth dignities, prelacies, and confirmations, and also the favour of freends and foes, and hath under him thirtie legions.

§ [50] 49. Volac magnus Præses: progreditur uti puer alis angeli, super dracone equitans duobus capitibus. De occultis thesauris perfecte respondet, & ubi serpentes videantur, quos & viribus dedestitutos tradit in exorcistæ manus. Dominium habet legionum triginta.

(49) Valac [Volac] is a great president, and commeth abroad with angels wings like a boie, riding on a twoheaded dragon, he perfectlie answereth of treasure hidden, and where serpents may be seene, which he delivereth into the conjurors hands, void of anie force or strength, and hath dominion over thirtie legions of divels.

§ [51] 50. Gomory Dux fortis & potens: apparet ut mulier pulcherrima: ac ducali cingitur corona, in camelo equitans. Bene & vere respondet de præteritis, præsentibus, futuris, & occultis thesauris ubi lateant. Conciliat amorem mulierum, & maxime puellarum. Imperat legionibus vigintisex.

(50) Gomory a strong and a mightie duke, he appeareth like a faire woman, with a duchesse crownet about hir midle, riding on a camell, he answereth well and truelie of things present, past, and to come, and of treasure hid, and where it lieth: he procureth the love of women, especiallie of maids, and hath six and twentie legions.

§ [52] 51. Decarabia vel Carabia, magnus Rex & Comes: venit similis *. Vires herbarum & lapidum pretiosorum novit: efficit ut aves coram exorcista volent, & velut familiares ac domesticæ morentur, bibant & cantillent suo more. Parent huic triginta legiones.

(51) Decarabia or *Carabia*, [a great kind and earl,] he commeth like a * and knoweth the force of herbes and pretious stones, and maketh all birds flie before the exorcist, and to tarrie with him, as though they were tame, and that they shall drinke and sing, as their maner is, and hath thirtie legions.

§ [53] 52. Amduscias Dux magnus & fortis: procedit ut unicornu: in humana similiter forma, quando coram magistro suo se sistit: Et si præcipiatur, efficit facile ut tubæ & symphoniæ omniaque musicorum instrumentorum genera audiantur, nec tamen conspectui appareant: ut item arbores ad exorcistæ genu se inclinent. Optimus est una cum famulis. Imperium habet vigintinovem legionum.

(52) Amduscias a great and a strong duke, he commeth foorth as an unicorne, when he standeth before his maister in humane shape, being commanded, he easilie bringeth to passe, that trumpets and all musicall instruments may be heard and not seene, and also that trees shall bend and incline, according to the conjurors will, he is excellent among familiars, and hath nine and twentie legions.

§ [54] 53. Andras magnus Marchio: visitur forma angelica, capite nycticoraci nigro simili, in lupo nigro & fortissimo equitans, bajulansque manu gladium acutissimum. Novit interficere dominum, servum & coadjutores: author est discordiarum. Dominatur legionibus triginta.

(53) Andras is a great marquesse, and is seene in an angels shape with a head like a blacke night raven, riding upon a blacke and a verie strong woolfe, flourishing with a sharpe sword in his hand, he can kill the maister, the servant, and all assistants, he is author of discords, and ruleth thirtie legions.

§ [55] 54. Androalphus Marchio magnus, apparens ut pavo: graves edit sonitus: Et in humana forma

(54) Andrealphus [Androalphus] is a great marquesse, appearing as a pecocke, he raiseth great noises, and in

docet perfecte geometriam & mensuram spectantia: reddit hominem in argumentando argutum, & in astronomia prudentem, eundemque in avis speciem transmutat. Triginta huic subsunt legiones.

humane shape perfectlie teacheth geometrie, and all things belonging to admeasurements, he maketh a man to be a subtill disputer, and cunning in astronomie, and transformeth a man into the likenes of a bird, and there are under him thirtie legions.

§ [56] 55. Oze Præses magnus, procedit similis leopardo: sed hominem mentitus, reddit prudentem in artibus liberalibus: vere resondet de divinis & occultis: transmutat hominis formam: & ad eam insaniam eum redigit, ut sibi persuadeat esse quod non est, quemadmodum se esse regem vel papam, & coronam in capite gestare: duratque id regnum horam.

(55) Ose [Oze] is a great president, and commeth foorth like a leopard, and counterfeting to be a man, he maketh one cunning in the liberall sciences, he answereth truelie of divine and secret things, he transformeth a mans shape, and bringeth a man to that madnes [*or*, "drives insanity away"], that he thinketh himselfe to be that which he is not; as that he is a king or a pope, or that he weareth a crowne on his head, *Durátque id regnum ad horam* [and makes the kingdom of time endure (?).]

§ [57] 56. Aym vel Haborym Dux magnus & fortis: progreditur tribus capitibus, primo serpenti, simili, altero homini duos * habenti, tertio felino. In vipera equitat, ingentem facem ardentem portans, cujus flamma succenditur castrum vel civitas. Omnibus modis ingeniosum reddit hominem: de abstrusis rebus vere respondet. Imperat legionibus vigintisex.

(56) Aym or *Haborim* [Haborym] is a great duke and a strong, he commeth foorth with three heads, the first like a serpent, the second like a man having two * the third like a cat, he rideth on a viper, carrieng in his hand a light fier brand, with the flame whereof castels and cities are fiered, he maketh one wittie everie kind of waie, he answereth truelie of privie matters, and reigneth over twentie six legions.

§ [58] 57. Orobas magnus Princeps: procedit equo conformis: hominis autem indutus idolum, de virtute divina loquitur: vera dat responsa de præteritis, præsentibus, futuris, de divinitate & creatione: neminem decipit, nec tentari sinit: confert prælaturas & dignitates, amicorum item & hostium favorem. Præsidet legionibus viginti.

(57) Orobas is a great prince, he commeth foorth like a horsse, but when he putteth on him a mans idol [image], he talketh of divine vertue, he giveth true answers of things present, past, and to come, and of the divinitie, and of the creation, he deceiveth none, nor suffereth anie to be tempted, he giveth dignities and prelacies, and the favour of freends and foes, and hath rule over twentie legions.

§ [59] 58. Vapula Dux magnus & fortis: conspicitur ut leo alis ad modum gryphi. Reddit hominem subtilem & mirabilem in artibus mechanicis, philosophia, & scientiis quæ in libris continentur. Præfectus est trigintasex legionum.

(58) Vapula is a great duke and a strong, he is seene like a lion with griphens wings, he maketh a man subtill and wonderfull in handicrafts [mechanics], philosophie, and in sciences conteined in bookes, and is ruler over thirtie six legions.

§ [60] 59. Cimeries magnus Marchio & fortis: imperans in partibus Africanis: docet perfecte Grammaticam, Logicam & Rhetoricam. Thesauros detegit, & occulta aperit. Facit ut homo cursu celerrimo videatur transmutari in militem. Equitat in equo nigro & grandi. Legionibus viginti præest.

(59) Cimeries is a great marquesse and a strong, ruling in the parts of *Aphrica [Africa]*; he teacheth perfectlie grammar, logicke, and rhetorike, he discovereth treasures and things hidden, he bringeth to passe, that a man shall seeme with expedition to be turned into a soldier, he rideth upon a great blacke horsse, and ruleth twentie legions.

§ [61] 60. Amy Præses magnus: apparet in flamma ignea: sed humana assumpta forma, reddit hominem admirabilem in astrologia & omnibus artibus liberalibus. Famulos suppetit optimos: thesauros à spiritibus custoditos ostendit. Præfecturam habet legionem triginta sex, ex ordine partim angelorum, partim potestatum. Sperat se post mille ducentos annos ad Thronum septimum reversurum, quod credibile non est.

(60) Amy is a great president, and appeareth in a flame of fier, but having taken mans shape, he maketh one marvelous in astrologie, and in all the liberall sciences, he procureth excellent familiars, he bewraieth treasures preserved by spirits, he hath the governement of thirtie six legions, he is partlie of the order of angels, partlie of potestats, he hopeth after a thousand two hundreth yeares to returne to the seventh throne: which is not credible.

§ [62] 61. Flauros dux fortis: conspicitur forma leopardi & terribili. In humana specie vultum ostentat horrendum, & oculos flammeos. De præteritis, præsentibus & futuris plene & vere respondet. Si fuerit in triangulo, mentitut in cunctis, & fallit in aliis negotiis. Libenter loquitur de divinitate, mundi creatione & lapsu. Divina virtute cogitur, & omnes alii dæmones sive spiritus, ut omnes adversarios exorcistæ succendant & destruant. Et si virtute numinis ipsi

(61) Flauros a strong duke, is seene in the forme of a terrible strong leopard, in humane shape, he sheweth a terrible countenance, and fierie eies, he answereth trulie and fullie of things present, past, and to come; if he be in a triangle, he lieth in all things and deceiveth in other things, and beguileth in other busines, he gladlie talketh of the divinitie, and of the creation of the world, and of the fall; he is constrained by divine vertue, and so are all divels or spirits, to burne and destroie all the conjurors adversaries. And if he be

imperatum fuerit, exorcistæ tentationem non permittit. Legiones viginti sub sua habet potestate.

commanded, he suffereth the conjuror not to be tempted, and he hath twentie legions under him.

§ [63] 62. Balam Rex magnus & terribilis: prodit tribus capitibus, primo tauri, altero hominis, tertio arietis: cauda adhæc serpentina, oculis flammeis, equitans in urso fortissimo, & accipitrem in manu portans. Raucam edit vocem: perfectè respondet de præteritis, præsentibus & futuris: reddit hominem & invisibilem & prudentem. Quadraginta legionibus præsidet, & fuit ex ordine dominationum.

(62) Balam is a great and a terrible king, he commeth foorth with three heads, the first of a bull, the second of a man, the third of a ram, he hath a serpents taile, and flaming eies, riding upon a furious [very powerful] beare, and carrieng a hawke on his fist, he speaketh with a hoarse voice, answering perfectlie of things present, past, and to come, hee maketh a man invisible and wise, hee governeth fourtie legions, and was of the order of dominations.

§ [64] 63. Alocer Dux magnus & fortis: procedit ut miles in equo vasto insidens: facies ejus leonina, rubicunda valde cum oculis flammeis: graviter loquitur: hominem reddit admirabilem in astronomia & in omnibus artibus liberalibus: confert bonam familiam; Dominatur triginta sex legionibus.

(63) Allocer [Alocer] is a strong duke and a great, he commeth foorth like a soldier, riding on a great horsse, he hath a lions face, verie red, and with flaming eies, he speaketh with a big voice, he maketh a man woonderfull in astronomie, and in all the liberall sciences, he bringeth good familiars, and ruleth thirtie six legions.

§ [65] 64. Zaleos magnus Comes: apparet ut miles pulcherrimus in crocodilo equitans, & ducali ornatus corona, pacificus, &c.

(64) Saleos [Zaleos] is a great earle, he appeareth as a gallant [handsome] soldier, riding on a crocodile, and weareth a dukes crowne, peaceable, &c.

§ [66] 65. Wal Dux magnus & fortis: conspicitur ut dromedarius magnus ac terribilis: at in humana forma linguam sonat Ægyptiacam graviter. Hic præ cæteris amorem maxime mulierum conciliat: inde novit præsentia, præterita & futura: confert & gratiam amicorum atque inimicorum. De ordine fuit potestatum. Trigintaseptem legiones gubernat.

(65) Vuall [Wal] is a great duke and a strong, he is seene as a great and terrible dromedarie, but in humane forme, he soundeth out in a base [deep] voice the *Ægyptian* toong. This man above all other procureth the especiall love of women, and knoweth things present, past, and to come, procuring the love of freends and foes, he was of the order of potestats, and governeth thirtie seven legions.

§ [67] 66. Haagenti magnus Præses: ut taurus videtur, habens alas gryphi: sed assumpta facie humana, reddit hominem ingeniosum in quibuslibet: cuncta metalla in aurum transmutat, aquam in vinum, & ediverso. Tot legionibus imperat, quot Zagan.

(66) Haagenti is a great president, appearing like a great bull, having the wings of a griphen, but when he taketh humane shape, he maketh a man wise in everie thing, he changeth all mettals into gold, and changeth wine and water the one into the other, and commandeth as manie legions as *Zagan*.

§ [68] 67. Phœnix magnus Marchio: apparet uti avis phœnix puerili voce: sed antequam se sistit coram exorcista, cantus emittit dulcissimos: tunc autem cavendum exorcistæ cum suis sociis, ne suavitati cantus aures accommodent, sed ille mox huic jubeat humanam assumere speciem, tunc mire loquetur de cunctis scientiis admirandis. Poëta est optimus & obediens. Sperat se post mille ducentos annos ad septimum thronum rediturum. Viginti præest legionibus.

(67) Phoenix is a great marquesse, appearing like the bird *Phoenix*, having a childs voice: but before he standeth still before the conjuror, he singeth manie sweet notes. Then the exorcist with his companions must beware he give no eare to the melodie, but must by and by bid him put on humane shape; then will he speake marvellouslie of all woonderfull sciences. He is an excellent poet, and obedient, he hopeth to returne to the seventh throne after a thousand two hundreth yeares, and governeth twentie legions.

§ [69] 68. Stolas magnus Princeps: prodit forma nycticoracis: coram exorcista hominis simulachrum suscipit, docetque absolutè astronomiam. Herbarum & lapidum pretiosorum vires intelligit. Vigintisex legiones huic subjacent.

(68) Stolas is a great prince, appearing in the forme of a nightraven, before the exorcist, he taketh the image and shape of a man, and teacheth astronomie, absolutelie understanding the vertues of herbes and pretious stones; there are under him twentie six legions.

Legio 6666.

¶ *Note that a legion is 6 6 6 6, and now by multiplication count how manie legions doo arise out of everie particular.*

This was the work of one T. R. written in faire letters of red & blacke upõ parchment, and made by him, Ann. 1570. to the maintenance of his living, the edifieng of the poore, and the glorie

of gods holie name: as he himselfe saith.

Secretum secretorum tu operans sis secretus horum.

The secret of secrets; Thou that workst them, be secret in them.

CHAPTER III.

§ [70] 69. Observa horas in quibus quatuor reges, scilicet Amoymon rex Orientalis, Gorson rex Meridionalis, Zymymar rex Septentrionalis, Goap rex & princeps Occidentalis possunt constringi, à tertia hora usque ad meridiem, à nona hora usque ad vesperas.

The houres wherin principall divels may be bound, to wit, raised and restrained from dooing of hurt.

AMAYMON king of the east, *Gorson* king of the south, *Zimimar* king of the north, *Goap* king and prince of the west, may be bound from the third houre, till noone, and from the ninth houre till evening.

Item Marchiones à nona usque ad completorium, vel à completorio usque ad finem diei.

Marquesses may be bound from the ninth houre till compline, and from compline till the end of the daie.

Item Duces à prima usque ad meridiem: & observatur cœlum clarum.

Dukes may be hound from the first houre till noone; and cleare wether is to be observed.

Item Prælati in aliqua hora diei.

Prelates may be bound in anie houre of the daie.

Item Milites ab aurora usque ad ortum solis, vel à vesperis usque ad finem solis.

Knights from daie dawning, till sunne rising; or from evensong, till the sunne set.

Item Præses in aliqua hora diei non potest constringi, nisi rex cui paret, invocaretur, & nec in crepusculo noctis.

A President may not be bound in anie houre of the daie, except the king, whome he obeieth, be invocated; nor in the shutting of the evening.

Item Comites omni hora diei, dum sunt in locis campestribus vel sylvestribus, quo homines non solent accedere, &c.

Counties or erles [Counts or Earls] may be bound at anie houre of the daie, so it be in the woods or feelds, where men resort not.

CHAPTER IV.

Citatio Prædictorum spirituum.

The forme of adjuring or citing of the spirits aforesaid to arise and appeare.

Ubi quem volueris spiritum, hujus nomen & officium supra cognosces:

inprimis autem ab omni pollutione, minimum tres vel quatuor dies mundus esto in prima citatione, sic & spiritus postea obsequentiores erunt: fac & circulum, & voca spiritum cum multa intentione: primum vero annulum in manu contineto: inde hanc recitato benedictionem tuo nomine & socii, si præsto fuerit, & effectum tui instituti sortieris, nec detrimentum à spiritibus senties: imo tuæ animæ perditionem.

WHEN you will have anie spirit,you must know his name and office; you must also fast, and be cleane from all pollusion, three or foure daies before; so will the spirit be the more obedient unto you. Then make a circle, and call up the spirit with great intention,and holding a ring in your hand, rehearse in your owne name, and your companions (for one must alwaies be with you) this praier following, and so no spirit shall annoie you, and your purpose shall take effect. <(And note how this agreeth with popish charmes and conjurations.)>

§ 2. In nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi + patris & + filii & + spiritus sancti: sancta trinitas & inseparabilis unitas te invoco, ut sis mihi salus & defensio & protectio corporis & animæ meæ, & omnium rerum mearum. Per virtutem sanctæ crucis + & per virtutem passionis tuæ deprecor te domine Jesu Christe, per merita beatissimæ Mariæ virginis & matris tuæ atque omnium sanctorum tuorum, ut mihi concedas gratiam & potestatem divinam super omnes malignos spiritus, ut quoscunque nominibus invocavero, statim ex omni parte conveniant, & voluntatem meam perfecte adimpleant, quod mihi nihil nocentes, neque timorem inferentes,

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ the + father + and the sonne + and the Hollie-ghost + holie trinitie and unseparable unitie, I call upon thee, that thou maiest be my salvation and defense, and the protection of my bodie and soule, and of all my goods through the vertue of thy holie crosse, and through the vertue of thy passion, I beseech thee O Lord Jesus Christ, by the merits of thy blessed mother S. *Marie*, and of all thy saints, that thou give me grace and divine power over all the wicked spirits, so as which of them soever I doo call by name, they may come by and by from everie coast, and accomplish my will, that they neither be hurtfull or fearefull unto me, but rather obedient and diligent about me. And through thy vertue streightlie commanding them, let them fulfill my commandements, Amen. Holie, holie, Lord God of sabboth, which wilt come to judge the quicke and the

sed potius obedientes & ministrantes, tua districte virtute præcipiente, mandata mea perficiant, Amen. Sanctus sanctus sanctus dominus Deus Sabaoth, qui venturus es judicare vivos & mortuos: tu qui es & primus & novissimus, Rex regum & dominus dominantium Joth Aglanabrath El abiel anathi Enathiel Amazin sedomel gayes tolima Elias ischiros athanatos ymas heli Messias, per hæc tua sancta nomina & per omnia alia invoco te & obsecro te domine Jesu Christe, per tuam nativitatem, per baptismum tuum, per passionem & crucem tuam, per ascensionem tuam, per adventum spiritus sancti paracliti, per amaritudinem animæ tuæ; quando exivit de corpore tuo, per quinque vulnera tua, per sanguinem & aquam, quæ exierant de corpore tuo, per virtutem tuam, per sacramentum quod dedisti discipulis tuis pridie quam passus fuisti: per sanctam trinitatem, per individuam vnitatem, per beatam Mariam matrem tuam, per angelos & archangelos, per prophetas & patriarchas, & per omnes sanctos tuos, & per omnia sacramenta quæ fiunt in honore tuo: adoro te & obsecro te, benedico tibi & rogo, ut acceptes orationes has & conjurationes & verba oris mei, quibus uti voluero. Peto Domine Iesu Christe: da mihi virtutem & potestatem tuam super omnes angelos tuos, qui de cœlo ejecti sunt ad decipiendum genus humanum, ad attrahendum eos, ad constringendum, ad ligandum eos pariter & solvendum: Et ad congregandum eos coram me, & ad præcipiendum eis ut omnia, quæ possunt, faciant, & verba mea vocemque meam nullo modo contemnant: sed mihi & dictis meis

dead, thou which art *A* and *Omega*, first and last, King of kings and Lord of lords, *Ioth, Aglanabrath, El, Abiel, <Anathiel> [anathi Enathiel], Amazim, Sedomel, Gayes, [T*olima, Elias, Ischiros, Athanatos, Ymas*] Heli, Messias, <Tolimi, Elias, Ischiros, Athanatos, Imas>*. By these thy holie names, and by all other I doo call upon thee, and beseech thee O Lord Jesus Christ, by thy nativitie and baptisme, by thy crosse and passion, by thine ascension, and by the comming of the Holie-ghost, by the bitternesse of thy soule when it departed from thy bodie, by thy five wounds, by the bloud and water which went out of thy bodie, by thy vertue, by the sacrament which thou gavest thy disciples the daie before thou sufferedst, by the holie trinitie, and by the inseparable unitie, by blessed Marie thy mother, by thine angels, archangels, prophets, patriarchs, and by all thy saints, and by all the sacraments which are made in thine honour, I doo worship and beseech thee, I blesse and desire thee, to accept these prayers, conjurations, and words of my mouth, which I will use. I require thee O Lord Jesus Christ, that thou give me thy vertue & power over all thine angels (which were throwne downe from heaven to deceive mankind) to drawe them to me, to tie and bind them, & also to loose them,

obediant, & me timeant, per humanitatem & misericordiam & gratiam tuam deprecor & peto te adonay amay hortan vigedora mytay hel suranat ysion ysyesy & per omnia nomina tua sancta, per omnes sanctos & sanctas tuas per angelos & archangelos, potestates, dominationes & virtutes, & per illud nomen per quod Salomon contringebat dæmones, & conclusit ipsos Elhroch eban her agle goth joth othie venoch nabrat, & per omnia sacra nomina quæ scripta sunt in hoc libro & per virtutem eorundem, quatenus me potentem facias congregare & constringere omnes tuos spiritus de cœlo depulsos, ut mihi veraciter de omnibus meis interrogatis, de quibus quæram, responsionem veracem tribuant, & omnibus meis mandatis illi satisfaciant sine læsione corporis & animæ meæ & omnium ad me pertinentium, per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum filium tuum, qui tecum vivit & regnat in unitate spiritus sancti Deus per omnia secula.

to gather them togither before me, & to command them to doo all that they can, and that by no meanes they contemne my voice, or the words of my mouth; but that they obeie me and my saiengs, and feare me. I beseech thee by thine humanitie, mercie and grace, and I require thee *Adonay, Amay, Horta, Vege dora, Mitai, Hel, Suranat, Ysion, Ysesy*, and by all thy holie names, and by all thine holie he saints and she saints, by all thine angels and archangels, powers, dominations, and vertues, and by that name that *Salomon* did bind the divels, and shut them up, *Elhrach, Ebanher, Agle, Goth, Ioth, Othie, Venoch, Nabrat*, and by all thine holie names which are written in this booke, and by the vertue of them all, that thou enable me to congregate all thy spirits throwne downe from heaven, that they may give me a true answer of all my demands, and that they satisfie all my requests, without the hurt of my bodie or soule, or any thing else that is mine, through our Lord Jesus Christ thy sonne, which liveth and reigneth with thee in the unitie of the Holie-ghost, one God world without end.

Oh father omnipotent, oh wise sonne, oh Holie-ghost, the searcher of harts, oh you three in persons, one true

§ 3. O pater omnipotens, ô fili sapiens, ô spiritus sancte corda hominum illustrans, ô vos tres in personis, una vero deitas in substantia: qui Adam & Evæ in peccatis eorum pepercistis, & propter eorum peccata mortem subiisti tu fili turpissimam, in lignoque sanctæ crucis sustinuisti: ô misericordissime, quando ad tuam confugio misericordiam, & supplico modis omnibus quibus possum, per hæc nomina sancta tui filii, scilicet & , & per omnia alia sua nomina, quatenus concedas mihi virtutem & potestatem tuam, ut valeam tuos spiritus qui de cœlo ejecti sunt, ante me citare, & ut ipsi mecum loquantur, & mandata mea perficiant statim & sine mora, cum eorum voluntate, sine omni læsione corporis, animæ & bonorum meorum, &c. Continua ut in libro * Annuli Salomonis continetur.

godhead in substance, which didst spare *Adam* and *Eve* in their sins; and oh thou sonne, which diedst for their sinnes a most filthie [disgraceful] death, susteining it upon the holie crosse; oh thou most mercifull, when I flie unto thy mercie, and beseech thee by all the means I can, by these the holie names of thy sonne; to wit, *A* and *Omega*, and all other his names, grant me thy vertue and power, that I may be able to cite before me, thy spirits which were throwne downe from heaven, & that they may speake with me, & dispatch by & by without delaie, & with a good will, & without the hurt of my bodie, soule, or goods, &c:

as is conteined in the booke called *Annulus Salomonis*.

For *Annuli Salomonis*, see BN 7349, 15th century, no. 8. *De quattuor annulis* or *de quatuor annulis sapientissimi Salomonis*: Sl. 3847, fols. 66v-81.

§ 4. O summa & æterna virtus Altissimi, qui te disponente his judicio vocatis * vaycheon stimulamaton ezphares tetragrammaton olyoram irion esytion existion eryona onela brasym noym messias sother emanuël sabaoth adonay, te adoro, te invoco, totius mentis viribus meis imploro, quatenus per te præsentes orationes & consecrationes & conjurationes consecrentur videlicet, & ubicunque maligni spiritus in virtute tuorum nominum sunt vocati, & omni parte conveniant, & voluntatem mei exorcisatoris

Oh great and eternall vertue of the highest, which through disposition, these being called to judgement, *Vaicheon, Stimulamaton, Esphares, Tetragrammaton, Olioram, Cryon [irion], Esytion, Existion, Eriona, Onela, Brasim, Noym, Messias, Soter, Emanuel, Sabboth [Sabaoth], Adonay*, I worship thee, I invocate thee, I imploie thee with all the strength of my mind, that by thee, my present praiers, consecrations, and conjurations be hallowed: and whersoever wicked spirits are called, in the

diligenter adimpleant, fiat fiat fiat, Amen.

vertue of thy names, they may come togither from everie coast, and diligentlie fulfill the will of me the exorcist. *Fiat, fiat, fiat, Amen*.

§ .5. Hæc blasphema & execranda hujus mundi fæx & sentina pœnam in magos prophanos bene constitutam, pro scelerato mentis ausu jure meretur.

[(5) This kind of blasphemy and swearing constitutes the worst kind of refuse and dregs of the earth, and punishment of these profane magi is well deserved.]

FINIS

Author: Weyer, Johann, 1515-1588.
Title: Opera omnia. Editio nova et hactenus desiderata.
Published: Amstelodami, Apud Petrum vanden Berge, 1660.
Description: <44>, 1002 (i.e. 1006), <59> p. illus., ports. 21 cm.
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Medicine--History--16th century.
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CULTURE AND HISTORY

Jolomari – The ghosts that are chasing away evil spirits from village Begnishte in Macedonia

The night when the dead are in motion to fight against evil



by **Ana T.**

2k Views



Source: istrazijamakedonija.com.mk

The small territory of Macedonia holds a large number of customs, traditions and habits. Macedonian tradition has a whole range of ways of celebrating the holidays,

and the ones which are the most characteristic are often associated with pagan beliefs. Once, you've had the chance to read an article about the custom in Vevchani, Macedonia in which people wear scary masks and dance pagan dances.

This happens in the period of Vasilitsa (Василица), a holiday being celebrated during the so-called "Unbaptized days," a period that lasts from Christmas to Epiphany, when according to a legend, Jesus wasn't baptized and the Devil was struggling to deceive Jesus and make Him to refuse to be baptized; this way, the will of God wouldn't be fulfilled.



Jolomari Fire Dance

People believe that in the Unbaptized days, the dead are in motion and various vampires including the night demons (In Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia known as "karakondzhuli"), witches, fairies and other evil spirits are active and they're working hard with the intention to do harm. To protect them from evil things and situations, people perform various magical protective rituals.

Another pagan ritual that occurs in the period of Vasilitsa is the ritual of Jolomari (Macedonian: џоломари). This rite takes place in the village Begnishte near the city of Kavadarci. Jolomari's history began centuries ago when the same people were running away from the Ottoman Turks.



Jolomari Men Dancing/© Toshe Ognjanov

They left the village Ozot and came on the territory of Begnishte (the name of the village comes from the word бега/бега which means "to escape" or "escapes"). The ritual begins at night when the Jolomari men go out in the village and start their dance with the idea to chase away the evil spirits.

From the very beginning, the group makes noise and chaos, and their appearance causes a combination of fascination and chills.



Jolomari Men from Begnishte/Source: telegraf.mk © Toshe Ognjanov

The Jolomari is a group of ~15 men and three of them are dressed as women; one bride and one old woman who serve as a symbol for a new and fruitful year. The other men wear beards and mustaches made of wool and hoods made of goat cloth.

What is most frightening in their appearance are the men's black faces covered with charcoal; with goggled eyes and wide open moth, the Jolomari will give you the creepiest moment in your life.

Their ritual and their movements are accompanied by strong noises of the metal bells which are attached to the Jolomari's waists. The equipment of one Jolomar weighs about twenty kilograms.



Jolomari Final (Dawn) Dance/Photo © Toshe Ognjanov

The Jolomari have sticks and/or canes with which they touch and hit the villagers' butt; they tease the people, claiming that this will bring a healthy and successful year to everyone. This ritual lasts until early morning when the Jolomari walk around with a donkey and collect meat and rakija from the village houses.

Before they begin to collect meat and rakija, the Jolomari finish their rite with a dance that is accompanied only by "music" produced by the heavy bells.

The Jolomari line up in a circle; the oldest gives a starting beat and the others dance to the given rhythm. The bride, the groom and the grandmother stand in the dancing circle's center. Then, the groom starts simulating an intercourse with both of the "women," an act which is a symbol for a fruitful year.

Would you dance the dance of ghosts?

#BEGNISTE #DANCE #GHOSTS #MACEDONIA #MACEDONIAN CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS #PAGAN #PAGAN SLAVS #PAGANISM #VAMPIRES

Leave a comment

Comment As ...



Perun
September 21

Y.O.L.O.MARI



Kat
September 21

Kukeri / Zvončari / Jolomari are obviously all the same stuff just different name

Thought these ones with beards are looking the best haha!



NikeBG
September 21

Indeed, it seems similar to the kukeri, though not exactly the same. After all, there are a number of similar rituals in the Balkans, performed at different times and with some various differences, like the rusalii f.e. (btw, that last part about the simulated copulation reminds me of a very similar ancient Roman ritual, which was practised here in the medieval Balkans as well). At least they're not naked though, which was customary for the zmey-chasing ritual. 😛



GLK
September 21 edited September 21

This seems very similar to the Pagan tradition "Barbari" known on the Greek side of the border, mainly performed in the villages of descendants of Slavic-Macedonians (now known as Greeks), or otherwise, similar to "Kukeri" also performed in FYR Macedonia and some other Balkan countries like Bulgaria, maybe Romania also. As far as I am aware, Kukeri/Barbari is performed around New Year and the start of Spring season (around Easter); largely again to warn off evil spirits but also to provide a good harvest, health, and

Jorogumo–‘The Whore Spider’

日本Japan Powered

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February 23, 2013 Andrew Kincaid



A Jorogumo, surrounded by her children.

One day a logger was going about his work. Since logging is an exhausting business, seeing as how this was Edo period Japan and the chainsaw hadn’t been invented yet, the man decides to take a short break. He hears the crash of a waterfall nearby, and decides that sitting on the stream bank and watching the waterfall would be a pleasant way to spend his lunch break.

However, no sooner has the man settled himself and unpacked his food than a strange something attaches itself to his foot! Puzzled, the man pulls the stick substance off. He sees that it is something like spider silk. He sticks the stuff to a nearby log. A moment later, the log goes zipping across the stream bank, only to disappear beneath the churning waters of the waterfall. Not a little spooked, our logger decides it’s best to take his lunch break elsewhere and he beats a hasty retreat back into the woods.

Our nameless logger might not know it, but he’s just had an encounter with a Jorogumo, whose name translates to either ‘binding bride’ or ‘whore spider’. Jorogumo are said to come to be when a spider, most often a species of orb-weaver, comes to be 400 years old. On its 400th birthday, the spider gains strange powers and becomes the size of a cow. It can then change its shape to a beautiful woman. It uses this shape and its skill at playing biwa (where it learned to play is a mystery–presumably spiders are all music majors?) to lure victims into its traps, where it then binds their feet and stores them away for later feeding.

The story I told above contains the basics of the typical Jorogumo story. The creatures are often, but not exclusively, associated with waterfalls. Many times they are considered malevolent, but in Kashikobuchi, a Jorogumo is worshiped as a protective spirit who saves people from drowning.

Jorogumo appear in stories from the Edo period. Today, the ‘whore spider’ makes appearances in stories, video games, and anime. In particular, there’s a Jorogumo in the anime/manga *xxxHolic*, who performs a particularly gruesome act during the course of the series (by the way, anyone seen that anime? I haven’t yet).

I haven’t found any modern claims of any Jorogumo sightings, which seems to be unusual as far as Japanese spirits goes. Perhaps no spiders have reached their 400th birthday in recent years…

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Jury convicts men who drained 3,000 tonnes — or $18.7M worth — of maple syrup from Quebec warehouse

| *November 12, 2016 2:03 PM ET*

nationalpost.com



MONTREAL – They styled themselves as free-market warriors, but a jury decided Saturday that three men who worked to drain $18.7-million worth of maple syrup from a provincial warehouse are common criminals.

After two days of deliberations at the courthouse in Trois-Rivières, Que., the 12-member jury delivered guilty verdicts against one of the ringleaders and two of his accomplices in the first case to come to trial following the brazen syrup theft.

Richard Vallières, 38, was found guilty of theft, fraud and traffic of stolen syrup. Étienne St-Pierre, 73, was convicted of fraud and trafficking, and Raymond Vallières, Richard's 62-year-old father, was convicted of possession of stolen syrup. A fourth accused, Jean Lord, was acquitted on a possession charge.



The trial heard that over a 12-month period in 2011 and 2012, nearly 3,000 tonnes of syrup disappeared from a warehouse used by the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers. In dollar terms, it was "the largest theft investigated by the Sûreté du Québec in its history," Crown prosecutor Julien Beauchamp-Laliberté said.

The theft and fraud were committed against the provincial federation, which acts as a marketing board. The stolen syrup was pumped into a black market that undermines the quotas and prices established by the federation, the prosecutor said.

During the fall of 2011, a tractor-trailer began appearing at a federation warehouse in Saint-Louis-de-Blandford, Que. and loading up barrels filled with syrup from that spring's harvest. The barrels were transported to a sugar shack belonging to Raymond Vallières, where they were emptied and replaced with stream water. When the stream froze over, the syrup-transfer operation moved to a warehouse in Montreal in early 2012. Finally, the prosecutor said, the thieves drained the barrels directly at the federation warehouse. In total, 9,571 barrels were surreptitiously emptied, representing more than half the stockpile the federation keeps to maintain a stable price.

It wasn't until August 2012 that federation staff grew suspicious when they noticed some barrels were dirty and rusty; when the containers were tapped, some sounded emptier than others.

The theft made international headlines, but the trial heard the valuable stockpile was protected with minimal security. The warehouse "wasn't fortified. There were no security cameras or guards," one of the co-owners testified.

The crime occurred amid a long-running dispute between the federation and rogue syrup producers and buyers who don't want to be constrained by the quota system. Sébastien Jutras, a trucker who served eight months in prison after pleading guilty to his involvement in the plot, testified that after



one syrup delivery, Raymond Vallières offered his opinion of the federation and the syrup being drained from its reserves: “Stealing from thieves is not stealing,” he said.

In a 2014 police interview played for the jurors, Richard Vallières said he had been buying and selling on Quebec’s maple syrup black market for 10 years and had previous run-ins with the federation. “They were after me because I buy a lot. . . . They want more control over the syrup,” he said.

The trial heard that as much as $200,000 in cash changed hands for a single syrup transaction, and the players used burner phones to avoid detection.

Richard Vallières’ defence was that he committed the theft under duress. He testified that when he realized the syrup he was buying came from the federation warehouse, he tried to back out. But the seller, who cannot be identified because he faces a jury trial in January, threatened him at gunpoint. Vallières said his wife and young daughter were also threatened.

But other evidence suggested Vallières was not too troubled by the theft. The jury heard of friendly text messages between him and the supposedly menacing seller. When the theft was uncovered and splashed across the news, Vallières’ response was, “The party’s over,” the jury heard.

Richard Vallières, who had been out on bail, was ordered detained immediately by Superior Court Justice Raymond Pronovost, while the other two remain free until sentencing. A sentencing hearing has been scheduled for Jan. 27.

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Network Polis

Liang Yue Chi to read (new version)

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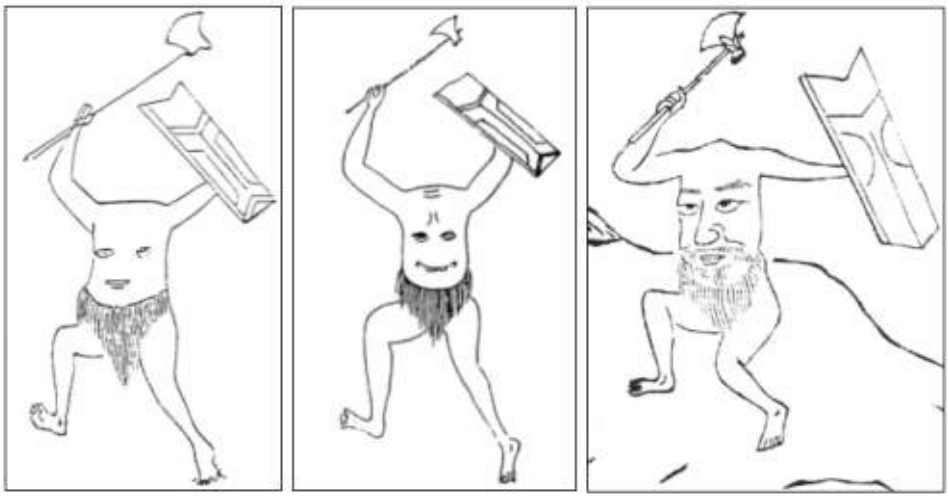
- [] History for self-decepti on triterpenoids
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Shan Hai Jing of criminal days painted image

Not only will produce the classic interpretation, the interpretation will be derived from the one-sided interpretation of the phenomenon underscores the literal language of symbols will be self-generated sense. Classic almost impossible not to literal language symbols performance, so the literal language of the existence of liquidity, but also makes the classic presentation, or your own interpretation of the classic process, necessarily fall into a verbal expression difficult innings.

- Solutions Kun Cheng, <is believed in speaking? And as said by still? > (Note 1)

Xingtian origin of the legend can be traced back to "Shan Hai Jing" in the records:

Days Emperor punishment and thus compete God, Emperor off their first, often sheep mountain burial. Denominated in milk for the head to navel as the mouth, dry Qi operation to dance. <Overseas W>

This is the strange story, as compared with the lack of a variety of ethnic foot arm "Shan Hai Jing" in the records, and there are indeed unique. Why? Because this legend, highlighting the inter-tribal battle in ancient times, killing bloody scene. The names of non-criminal days, torturer, also beheaded; day who is also the head, punishment days is

en Deadly Sins (on)
· [Poem] are not afraid of life
· Poetry Life] released (b)
· [Poem] life injury (b)
· [Reading notes] drunk o n Hermit "fox edge" Rea ding

the "decapitation" means. After decapitated criminal days, and she was "operating Ganqi to dance", compared to Western Headless Horseman legend favorably.

Tao Qian Jin dynasty in after reading this story, what has to write a poem:

> Jingwei title micro wood, will fill the sea; criminal-day dance dry Qi, Meng Chi Guchang in.
> Neither consider the same thing, no longer go of regret. Acts located in the heart of Xi, Ju can be a really good time. (Read Shan Hai Jing (thirteen) Part Ten)

After Tao Qian poem written, "criminal-day dance dry Qi" word, there is an error due to private copies "criminal-day dance dry Qi" and "no shape tender Chitose," Er said, quite three hog crossing charm. What wrong? It is also for this reading fought a war of words, has yet to break.

Northern Vision and six years, has hung in the "Tao Jing section set" made after Postscript presented his views:

> Yuan Ming Shan Hai Jing poetry reading "no shape tender Chitose, Chi Meng inherent in" sentence, actually Mo Xiao its meaning, after reading "Shan Hai Jing" says: "torture days, animals were also good title Ganqi dance" is know five words are wrong. Shaped tender but criminal days, but no Chitose dance dry Qi ear, and so is the Associated next sentence.

Southern Song Dynasty, Zhou Bida (1126-1204) in the "two old Hall Poetry" book rebuttal. he thinks:

> More than that Hiro said solid good, then this title Jing section thirteen, refers to articles about the issue. As prequel circulates in mind braggadocio, the fear Cipian specifically say Jingwei title reclaimed wood, no Chitose's life, while often in Chi Meng, of regret not going. If and refers criminal days, does not appear to phase continued. And the status of the last sentence says: "Acts located in the heart of Xi, Ju-

fans club

The occasion of the mid-Qing, Tao Shu (1779-1839) re-published "Tao Jing section set", he had the tendency of Hiro said:

> Ji Yun Yao men, Yun Ho "No Chitose"? Yao and Chitose, quite Ho Chi Peng War? Ancients no such fear also belong to grammar.

Dynasty, Lu Xun in "且介亭杂文 two set" <title undecided six grass> paper using "torture-day dance dry Qi," saying, in order to prove Yuanming "not smug all day and night," the existence of "King Kong

angry style "style. However, Guo wrote in his later years, "notes four reading poetry," but in favor of Zhou Bida views, he said:

> Such lucid poetry, Song has yet to complications, so-called "no-shaped tender Chitose, Meng Chi solid often" do not doubt its context intersection, then included the "shape tender without Chitose" to school "criminal-day dance dry Qi." Later deemed conclusive edition diameter change of the original book, this is a very strange legal case.

What yes? Non-what? Each justified, the outcome of each. A legal case without a head, actually debated for thousands of years, there was the spectacle of ancient and modern. Yesterday night, who "clean cut fast, live young head" criminal god tomb to me, I want to tell the world:

Oh! These nerds you are wrong, I was in the belly dance for the gods to see it!

(Note 1) taken from [when] all the blogs sojourn http://blog.chinatimes.com/chekhov/archive/2005/08/25/12595.html





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(Creation | offbeat creation)

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Philippines' Duterte calls for reintroduction of capital punishment

10:50 EST, 27 September 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

'If God doesn't exist we must have the death penalty': Philippines president claims growing atheism means people have a lack of fear and respect for the law

- **He said people's disrespect for the law is a reason for capital punishment**
- **Duterte also hinted that a rise in atheism has resulted in more violence**
- **The president's death squads have killed around 3,500 drug dealers**
- **A planned meeting with Barack Obama was cancelled after he insulted him**

Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte has spoken of his desire to reinstate the death penalty in the country saying growing atheism and agnosticism means people have developed a lack of fear and respect for the law.

The death penalty was officially abolished in the primarily Catholic country in 2006, but Duterte said that 'if God doesn't exist', capital punishment is the only way to ensure justice for the victims of terrible crimes.

Speaking to reporters on Monday the firebrand leader hinted that previous presidents had succumbed to pressure from priests and other 'bleeding hearts' who argued against capital punishment 'because only God can kill'.

Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte meets female police officers. The firebrand leader has made many remarks that has earned him the reputation of a loose cannon

Duterte, who assumed office in June and has launched deadly raids against drug gangs in the country, also questioned his own belief in God during the address.

'When a one-year-old baby, 18-months-old baby is taken from the mother's arms brought under a jeep and raped and killed. So where is God? My God, where are you?' he asked the crowd in capital Manila .

'I believe in God but that is my perpetual question to him,' he added.

'Where were you when we needed you?' He asked.

'It's not enough to say that at the end of the world, he will judge the living and the dead. What would be the purpose of all of that if the heartaches, sorrows and agony have already been inflicted in this world?' Duterte said.

Around 3,500 people have been killed by Duterte's death squads that are at war with the country's drug gangs

Police officers inspect the bodies of two supposed drug dealers killed by government forces in Manila on Friday

The former mayor of Davao City then cited the rising number of agnostics and atheists in the country as a reason as to why citizens don't have respect for the law-as they won't be held accountable for their actions after death.

'People in the Philippines no longer believe in the laws, because the fear is not there,' Duterte said in a mix of Filipino and English.

'That is why I said, give me back the death penalty.'

Although Duterte has campaigned for the death penalty around 3,500 people have been killed by death squads in his war on drugs since he came to power.

The leader is prone to controversy. Earlier in September a former member of one of his death squads claimed that Duterte had shot dead a justice department agent with an Uzi submachine gun and fed bodies to crocodiles while serving as mayor of Davao.

The claim, made by an alleged hitman, was strongly denied by the President's office.

A meeting with US president Barack Obama was cancelled after he called him a 'son of a whore' as it was believed the talks would focus solely on the death squads.

He also aimed expletives at UN secretary Ban-Ki moon and said he would eat a group of Islamist militants alive after they killed 14 people in his home city of Davao.

'They will pay. When the time comes, I will eat you in front of people,' he said at the time. 'If you make me mad, in all honesty, I will eat you alive, raw.'

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Killer apartment: This London flat comes with its own ‘murder room’ (PHOTOS)

rt.com

Published time: 9 Sep, 2016 23:11



© zoopla.co.uk

You never know what you might find when viewing a house - damp walls, sinking foundations or even dodgy housemates. One thing you don’t expect to find is a murder themed room, but this London apartment has just that.

On first look, this spacious 13 room semi-detached house in Upper Leystone looks like the perfect family home. It ticks all the boxes:

Yep, that’s right, this Victorian property includes what appears to be a murder room. You didn’t read that incorrectly.

No explanation is given for the room’s decor on the website advertising the property, or whether Dexter lived there at any stage.

It seems a lot of people wouldn’t be able to sleep in a house knowing this room was just down the hall, much like Bart Simpson’s eerie clown bed.

Not everyone found it weird though. For some, it wasn’t the murder room that annoyed them most at all.

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'Kim Fatty III' reference to Kim Jong Un deleted from Chinese Internet

upi.com

Derogatory words describing Kim's physique have been eliminated from search results in China.

By Elizabeth Shim | Nov. 11, 2016 at 12:53 PM



SEOUL, Nov. 11 (UPI) -- North Korean authorities may have requested Beijing to block searches of a phrase that mocks Kim Jong Un, according to reports.

Hong Kong news service Apple Daily had reported a derogatory nickname for Kim, "Kim Fatty III," was producing no results on Chinese social media networks and on search engine giant Baidu. The report suggested Pyongyang might have protested the term.

That news article, however, has also been deleted from search results on Chinese networks, according to South Korean newspaper Herald Business.

Reports say the epithet for North Korea's leader was still searchable in September. By October and November, the results were being censored.

Chinese online commenters began making fun of Kim after December 2011, when he was seen mourning his father during a ceremony in Pyongyang, according to China Digital Times.

The search term was not available as recently as Tuesday, the report stated, but social media users were sharing screenshots of what appeared to be the Apple Daily headline which read, "North Korea Requests Chinese People Respectfully Address Kim Jong Un, Not Call Him Other Names or Kim Fatty III!"

Chinese commenters have frequently used the term on networks to air their frustrations at the North Korean ruler.

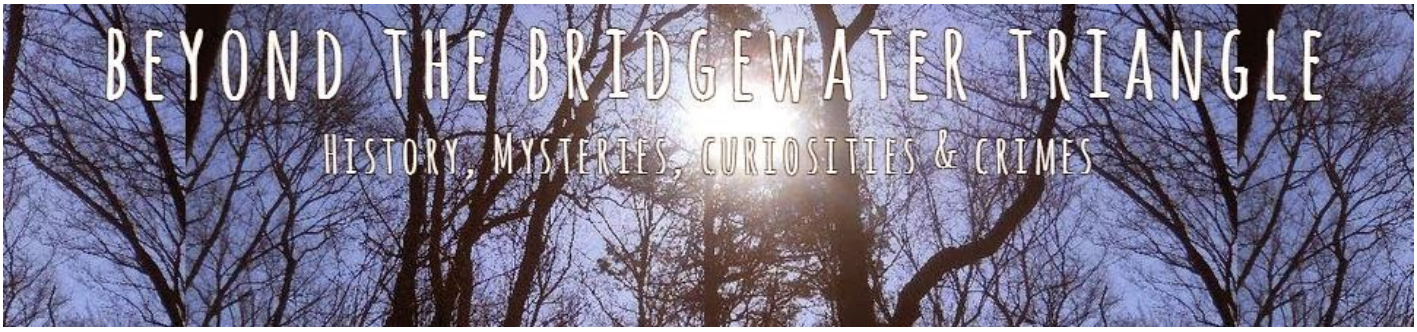
In August, Beijing was enforcing a new policy to curb anti-North Korea speech ridiculing Kim and in September an anti-Kim Jong Un rally was held in a Chinese city but photographs of the protest were promptly deleted by Chinese government censors.

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The Bridgewater Triangle & The King Philip War Theory: A Basic View

thebridgewatertriangle.com



The Bridgewater Triangle & The King Philip War Theory: A Basic View



In the mid-1970s, cryptozoologist, Loren Coleman noticed an inundation of reports coming from the Bridgewater, Massachusetts area. Tales of Bigfoot sightings, Thunderbird sightings, and other cryptozoological wonders made Coleman stop and take notice. In his correspondence and research with others interested in the area, such as Peter Rodman, Coleman knew there was something special here...this area that Bridgewater residents jokingly dubbed "The Bridgewater Triangle." Coleman liked the name and ran with it. Over thirty years later, reports of bizarre run-ins with ghosts, UFOs, and other otherworldly beings continue, making The Bridgewater Triangle one of the most charged paranormal hotspots in the world.

Why is this area a magnet for paranormal activity? Some Bridgewater Triangle investigators believe that the answer lies in history. King Philip's War was statistically the bloodiest war ever to be fought on American soil. The punishments inflicted during the war that lasted from June, 1675 to August, 1676 were unfathomly barbaric -- on both sides. Butchering, beheading, kidnapping, burning towns to the ground, this war was filled with torturous corruption. The most horrific act was the death of King Philip himself.

"Captain Church ordered his body to be pulled out of the mire to the upland. So some of Captain Church's Indians took hold of him by his stockings, and some by his small breeches (being otherwise naked) and drew him through the mud to the upland ; and a doleful, great, naked, dirty beast he looked like. Captain Church then said, that forasmuch as hs had caused many an Englishman's body to be unburied, and to rot above ground, that not one of his bones should be buried. And calling his old Indian executioner, bid him behead and quarter him."

And as Church promised, rot in the sun above ground Philip's body did. His head was sold to the village of Plymouth for thirty shillings were it was staked and proudly displayed at the Plymouth Fort for the next 25 years.
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David Pacey faces up to $600 in fines and a day-long trial for clearing trails but says he won't stop

2016/10/16 cbc.ca

cbc masthead logo

'Parks Canada ... takes protection of resources under its care, upholding of regulations, very seriously'

By Yvette Brend, CBC News Posted: Oct 16, 2016 12:00 PM PT Last Updated: Oct 16, 2016 12:00 PM PT



David Pacey says he has some expertise at trail building and has no plans to stop. (David Pacey/Facebook)

Retired Radium Hot Springs road engineer David Pacey has pleaded not guilty to regulatory infractions for voluntarily fixing park trails, but Parks Canada insists he is breaking rules.

Neither are backing down, so this standoff is headed to trial as soon as the judge can find a date for the day-long proceedings proposed by a prosecutor.

Pacey says it all began after he got sick of what he describes as treacherous trails in Kootenay National Park.

So he used his own wheelbarrow and pick axe to fix the popular pathways, without permission.

Parks Canada warned him to stop, then charged him under the Parks Act.



On Oct. 11 Pacey pleaded not guilty to double infractions, so the prosecutor pushed forward looking for a date from the court, asking for a day or more for trial to hear five witnesses including park wardens and a superintendent.

"The judge just looked over his glasses and said 'Really?' all this for two regulatory tickets?" said Pacey who admits to laughing out loud in the Invermere court room.

"This is bizarre. Absolutely bizarre," he said.

"[Parks Canada] are trying to intimidate me and the public to stop us from doing their job," said Pacey who has had overwhelming support in local media to keep on fixing the trails.

"Most people say 'Give him the tools and let him run.'" said Pacey.



Despite outcry, Parks Canada has no plans to back down.

Requests for an interview earned an email from the federal service:

"Parks Canada is a world leader in conservation and takes the protection of the resources under its care, and upholding of its Acts and Regulations, very seriously," wrote Tania Peters, a communications officer with Parks Canada.

"It would not be appropriate to comment at this time as the matter is before the courts."

Years spent repairing without permission

Pacey says he started work on the trails eight years ago, ignoring warnings to stop.

He claims he's cleared at least five kilometres of trail in the southern parts of Kootenay National Park.

But with all his bush-clearing efforts he says there are still alpine areas, especially the 16.5-kilometre Kindersley Lake area loop that remain dangerous.



"It's a goat track, and if somebody falls they could roll down a 400-500 foot slope," said Pacey.

Parks Canada not impressed

Pacey was given a ticket after caught brush-clearing in April, 2015.

He faces two counts of damaging flora, fauna or a natural object, which is a contravention of the Canada National Parks Act.

A person can face a $300 fine for this if convicted of the summary offence, akin to speeding or littering.

CBC

Radio-Canada



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A-Yokai-A-Day: Kyokotsu

matthewmeyer.net



Posted onSunday October 30th, 2016by Matt

There's only one more day until Halloween, which means that after tonight, there is only one more day of A-Yokai-A-Day left, and only one more yokai after this one.

Tonight's yokai was requested on Patreon earlier this year. Kyokotsu was invented by Toriyama Sekien, as many many yokai were. I think it's an interested creation, because most of his puns were cute or bizarre, while this one is genuinely pretty creepy looking. The original illustration by Toriyama Sekien is hard to be when it comes to disturbing illustrations!

In the illustration, the kyokotsu is seen rising out of a well. Wells have been a staple of Japanese horror for centuries. When talking about Japanese ghosts in wells, it's hard to ignore the most famous well-ghost of all, Okiku. A number of other less-known well stories exist, though, like the ghost of the violet well, and even some taka onna stories, in which a man sees his wife fall down a well and easily hop back out again. And of course, today probably the most well-known (no pun intended) famous well-ghost is found in Sadako of *The Ring*.

Click below to read more about kyokotsu, and stay tuned tomorrow for the last A-Yokai-A-Day of 2016!



Kyokotsu

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Kyrgyzstan Can't Find Constitution, Referendum To Change It Moves Forward

thediplomat.com

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Children play by fountains during Kyrgyzstan's 25th independence day celebrations on August 31, 2016.

Unless something truly surprising happens, it looks like Kyrgyzstan will have a referendum on December 11.

By Catherine Putz for The Diplomat
October 20, 2016

It doesn't really matter that Kyrgyzstan seems to have lost the original copy of its 2010 constitution, at least in the sense that it remains a legal document whether the state locates the original or not. But the missing paper is emblematic of the constitution's impermanence and the Kyrgyz leadership's apparent disregard for its own laws.

Kyrgyzstan has had three constitutions: the original 1993 post-independence document which was amended twice before and twice after the 2005 Tulip Revolution, a constitution passed by referendum in 2007, and the present constitution passed by referendum in 2010 after the second revolution.

It seems a third time was not a charm. There has been talk for some time about constitutional changes. Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev doubled down over the summer on the idea. He'd long been characterizing the constitution as being laced with "mines." The spring decision by the UN Human Rights Committee that jailed activist Azimjon Askarov should be released — a decision the present Kyrgyz constitution mandates the state adhere to — added fuel to Atambayev's argument in the public sphere. The Askarov case was parlayed as evidence that the Kyrgyz constitution, as it presently is written, gives away the state's sovereignty to international bodies.

That was, of course, by design. Also by design was a stipulation written into the law which enacted the 2010 constitution that stated the constitutional provisions providing for amendments to the document would come into force as of September 1, 2020.

Recognizing, perhaps, that Central Asian leaders like to tinker with constitutions, the interim government punted the possibility past the term-limit of the first post-second-revolution president. Atambayev's term expires in 2017 and the constitution prohibits him from a second run.

The Venice Commission, a body of constitutional experts hosted within the Council of Europe, responded to a request from a member of the Kyrgyz parliament this summer to review the proposed changes with the determination that they would "negatively impact the balance of powers." The commission noted that while the changes were described as needed to "clarify" the constitution, "the majority of the proposed amendments to the Constitution would appear to raise concerns with regard to key democratic principles, in particular the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary."

There seems to be disagreement within the Kyrgyz judicial branch about the constitutionality of amending the document now and the Venice Commission's harsh comments about the changes. The Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court said earlier this month that the changes are not

contrary to democratic principles and in line with constitutional procedures; but the Supreme Court has previously ruled that the constitution is not subject to change.

The Kyrgyz parliament passed through the bill for the referendum with little opposition. Recently parliament endorsed a bill setting the referendum date as December 11 (earlier versions set the date as December 4 — it's not clear why the change was made but December 4 is incidentally the date set for Uzbekistan's presidential election.) Unless Atambayev decides to nix the bills setting up the referendum, it looks like this is happening — the constitution be damned.

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The Lady Well at Modeligo

wordpress.com

https://thefadingyear.wordpress.com/2016/08/15/the-holy-well-at-modeligo/

thefadingyear

Posted on August 15, 2016August 15, 2016 by nevswift



Holy Well near Modeligo, Waterford

Gordon W. Foksayeth, 1911;

'In the parish of Modeligo, on the right bank of the Finisk, there may be found a remarkable specimen of the many holy wells of Ireland.

The name "well" is really deceptive : for the water is merely rainwater, and does not derive its existence from any spring, but is simply contained in a bath-shaped receptacle in a piece of limestone jutting up from the surface of the land. The dimensions of the well are about 4 feet long, by 3 feet broad, and 2 feet deep. I have called it bath-shaped, as it is an oval in appearance, and seems to be an unusually large bullaun, or a natural cavity in the rock. There is generally about six inches of water in it, and a legend asserts the existence of an inscribed cross and an inscription on the bottom. I have seen the cross myself, but it seems to be merely an accidental mark on the stone.

On the 14th day of August, the water is removed from the basin, and a fresh supply put in, by a man who lives close by; and the following day a pattern used to take place in the olden times. People may still be seen to congregate on the aforesaid date, and they invariably hang mementoes, in the shape of rags or other objects, on the ancient hawthorn bush that grows beside the well.

Tradition asserts that this well formerly existed some distance from its present position, and that a trooper of Cromwell's led his blind horse, in mockery, around it, in order to find out and test the miraculous powers of the place. The horse was cured, but the soldier became blind, and the following day the well had taken up its present position. The place is known to the natives as the tobar beannuighte, and is marked on the 0. S. as " Lady Well."'.

Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities Ireland sixth series 1, no. 2 1911, 186-187)

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Lantana officer recounts bizarre art theft investigation

LANTANA, Fla. - Scorned lovers. Millions of dollars of missing artwork.

It was part of a bizarre investigation to say the least for police in the quiet town of Lantana.

But one officer is finally speaking out about how his team cracked the case. We're also seeing photos of the crime scene and of the now relocated art.

Nicholas Zoullas, 80, of New York City, kept about 200 pieces of very expensive artwork in a home he bought for his mistress on Hypoluxo Island.

After a falling out with his girlfriend, the art disappeared.

Lantana Police officer, Eddie Tavcar, said it was like something out of a movie.

"It was overwhelming. An ex-girlfriend, flashy cars -- a couple of Bentleys, two Ferraris," recounts Tavcar.

Tavcar and his team had a complex mission: Find the millions of dollars of stolen art.

"Just another day on the job," Tavcar said.

In September, Lantana Police got a frantic call from Zoullas. Police say his ex-mistress, 43-year old Stacy Cliett, and her new boyfriend, 52-year old Todd Stephens, stole at least $15 million worth of paintings, relics and statues from the home.

"She was upset. The ride was over. The good life was coming to an end," said Tavcar. "It got really ugly there in the end."

Christie's and Sotheby's auction houses, who had a stake on the art, put a lot of pressue on the police to find the stolen art. The artwork included high-profile artists such as Luciano Castelli,

who sold a painting in 2011 through Sotheby's at a price of $2.3 million.

Tavcar tried reasoning with Cliett to get her to reveal the whereabouts of the art.

"I told her, 'If you're able to get the artwork back and give it to them, it will all go away.' And the lawyers assured her of that. But she refused," said Tavcar.

"We got her in the knick of time because if that U-HAUL full of that artwork would have gone, we probably never would have found it," said Tavcar.

Tavcar spent countless hours cataloging all 200 pieces of stolen art, much of it exotic in nature and too graphic to show.

"There was a mannequin of a nude woman. It was very life-like. In fact, it was made with human hair," said Tavcar.

Some paintings dated back to at least the 1700s. They even found ancient relics, possibly dating back to the Aztecs.

"You can work a narcotics case, done and over with. But with this, it's different. Every piece is unique. And with some of it, was like holding history in your hands, something you would only see in a museum," said Tavcar.

Lantana Police and their team, which included PBSO, found every last piece of artwork, closing the case. The pieces are now heading back to its owner in New York.

"I hope it's the last one," said Tavcar.

Cliett and her boyfriend are out on bond. Their trials are pending.

She's still living in her ex-lover's home. WPTV's Alanna Quillen knocked on the door hoping to talk to her but no one answered.

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End of an era as last cattle swim on Skye

whfp.com

West Highland Free Press

West Highland Free Press

AuthorLisa FalconerDate 14 October 2016



profile-iain-macdonald-7

KEITH MACKENZIE

The end of an era in Skye crofting was signalled this week when Staffin man Iain MacDonald sold the last of his cattle.

Iain is widely thought to be the last Scottish crofter to annually swim his cattle to winter grazings — a practice which has been featured regularly in recent years in print and on TV, most recently on BBC Scotland's 'Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands' programme.

Now 85, Iain this week sold his remaining 20 cows, 13 calves and a bull — and brought an end to nearly 60 years of cattle-rearing.

He was well known because every October since 1959 he has moved heifers across the short sea crossing from the Staffin mainland to winter pasture on Stenscholl Island.



profile-iain-macdonald-1

Iain said he had decided to call it a day with the cattle after a recent knee operation had 'slowed him down'. However, his crofting days aren't over and he will continue to keep sheep.

"I've had a knee operation, and I've not been a very good patient," joked Iain, who spent his early years in Glasgow before moving to the family croft in Staffin in his teens. "Old age has caught up with me now, and I've had to be on a quad bike most of the time. That's the last of the cattle, after nearly 60 years.

But I've got sheep now and will carry on crofting if I can."

The annual cattle drive to Stenscholl Island would see Iain and local helpers herd the cattle down the beach, before he rowed alongside them for the 150-metre crossing. Always timed to coincide with low tides, the crossing took place in October and the cows would return to Staffin in January.

In over six decades Iain had apparently never lost an animal in making the crossing. But this week he lamented the fact that his careful stewardship failed to yield much of a return at the mart.

“I’m afraid I didn’t get a very good price for them,” he said.

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The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow

Moderators: Andrew Gough, Moderator, Artifice

newtopic postreply **Page 1 of 1** [10 posts]

Print view Previous topic | Next topic

Author	Message
richard.webster	**Post subject:** The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow **Posted:** 09 Oct 2009 9:23 pm

offline

High King



Joined: 08 Apr 2008 6:44 am
Posts: 2801
Location: Winchester

The following photograph by Andrew, and caption, in the website's new gallery caught my attention.



The Bogeyman, Longleat, England
The legend of the "Bogeyman" is well documented, but did you know it is based on the legend of "Bogley", an evil entity that lives in a round barrow in the Wiltshire countryside?

Because I grew up round there, and have been back recently - and because I didn't know about this particular legend - I went to take a few photos, and see what I could find out about it. It seems that there are a number of legends and folk tales about this barrow on its high hill, said to have been built by the Devil himself, and of the entity known as Bogley.

The round barrow this creature is said to inhabit stands on top of Cley Hill, just outside the Wiltshire town of Warminster, a lone peak of c. 1,000 ft, it dominates the surrounding countryside, and was the site of an Iron Age hillfort. The barrow, though, is older, and dates from the Bronze Age. In more recent times, Cley Hill became briefly famous in the 1960s and 1970s, when there was a spate of sightings of strange lights in the sky, and the place became a mecca for UFO enthusiasts. Less so now, I think.

The view below is taken from the foot of the hill. The Iron Age village was about two thirds of the way up, behind the shelter of the horizontal cleft running left to right. The terrain is chalk grassland, rich in wild flowers, and designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It has been quarried in the past, and cattle still graze here, not just in the fields below, but on the upper slopes too.



The legend of the hill being the construction of the Devil seems to be a well established one, and appears in various sources. The earliest reference I came across was VS Manley's *Folklore of the Warminster District* (1924), as quoted on Julian Cope's Modern Antiquarian website, which has a page dedicated to Cley Hill, and includes a number of photos, field reports and postings by members of his forum.

http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/sit ... l#folklore

According to the legend, the Devil was walking to Devizies, in another part of the county, carrying a large sack of dirt on his back, because the people of this town had enraged him by converting to Christianity, and he was intending on submerging them in earth as a punishment. However, when passing by Warminster, a wily local persuaded him that the journey would take so long that it wasn't worth his trouble, and so the Devil discarded the earth, thereby creating the hill. Given that there was an Iron Age village on that hill many hundreds of years before anyone in Wessex would have been converting to Christianity, this legend seems even more implausible than most, but it probably alludes to the hill being an important site of pagan worship, and the presence of the Bronze Age barrow suggests it was a place of veneration long before it became a settlement.

Taken from the top of the hill, this photo looks down on the remains of this settlement, which lies in a relatively sheltered haven on the hill's upper slopes.



And the association with a devil, or with older religions and traditions, clearly had some resonance, because it is said that, until as late as the 1920s, every Palm Sunday, people would go up there to set light to the grass, in order to "burn the devil out".

On a similar theme, there's a story that a massive Sarsen stone used to stand on one of the hill's flanks, on the underside of which was said to be an image of the Devil. The stone is no longer there, and one account has it that, in continuance of the sort of tradition referred to above, this stone was pushed down the hill in around 1940 - on Palm Sunday.

Another source spoke of the hill being the home of the king of the Wiltshire fairies, and speculates that this is the real reason behind the strange lights sometimes seen emanating from there.

Hills and mountains, particularly ones that stand alone, and tower over their surroundings, are so often seen as magical, mystical places, and give rise to all sorts of legends about what might be contained within them, as was recently discussed on the Glastonbury Tor thread.

It's also worth considering this hill for a moment in the context of it's wider landscape. It's only a few miles from Westbury White Horse, a giant chalk horse carved into a hillside, the present version of which was cut in 1778, but upon the imprint of a much older horse (albeit with some changes in design), believed to date from the same period as the famous one at Uffington. And if one were to stand on the round barrow on top of Cley Hill and look out towards Westbury, and then look straight down, one would see another interesting landscape feature. This:



Called Little Cley Hill, and almost certainly man-made, this forms a curious adjunct to its much higher neighbour. The path to the top one can see evokes thoughts of ceremonial processions and another Wiltshire landscape mound - Silbury Hill. I don't have Julian Cope's first book, *The Modern Antiquarian*, but in it he apparently sees the large hill as a recumbent mother hill, with the little hill forming the head. Others have detected the shape of the female form in certain other features.

But what of the particular legend of Bogley, aka the Bogeyman?

This is the round barrow in which he's said to reside.



The day I went, someone had recently had a fire up there, the remains of which were still smouldering in the bowl like depression at the top of the mound. It was a clear, sunny day, and one could see a long way across the Wiltshire and Somerset countryside. On enquiring about the legend of Bogley, prior to my visit, I'd been told about a ritual involving walking nine times around the barrow in a counter-clockwise direction. Standing there, I wondered about the purpose of the ritual, and whether enacting it might make the demon appear.

The word Bogeyman is said to derive from Bogley, and it seems that this word comes from one only very slightly different - Bugley. This is the old name of a hamlet at the foot of the hill, where there is a spring called the Hog's Well. According to Katy Jordan, author of "The Haunted Landscape", on a web page she's written about sacred wells, and quoting the aforementioned VS Manley, the being said to inhabit the barrow is less of a bogeyman than the popular use of that word would have us believe, for it is said:

The benevolent guardian spirit of this well, which lived in a barrow on nearby Cley Hill, told the local people to use the site of the Hog's Well only for curing weak eyes. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the flowers of Ground Ivy were brewed in the water to make an eye-bath. Farmers with a weak pig in a litter would stand the piglet in the spring for fifteen minutes and it would be as sprightly as anything.

http://people.bath.ac.uk/liskmj/living- ... orspa2.htm

It seems like the legend of the well, the legend of the hill, and the legend of the round barrow, have inevitably become conflated over time, nicely undermining the notion of a bogeyman as we commonly understand such an entity. This Bugleman / Bogleman / Bogeyman seems to have a noble purpose in protecting local livestock, although there appears to be a dark side as well. According to the JC website, quoting from the Manley book on local folklore:

However, bad things happened to people (and animals) that misused the spring. A woman who was gathering sticks nearby once drank the water. She was found dead in her bed the next day. Another time a cow stood in the water (and probably messed it up with a cow pat). The spirit was very angry and made the cow sink into the mud. The cowherd saw this and tried to dig a ditch to drain the water away - but it was no good, the cow sank deeper in until she drowned.

And a book I found in the local town, called "Haunted Places of Wiltshire" (Rupert Matthews, 2004), reports that the spirit of the barrow has occasionally been seen, or at least so people believe. According to Matthews, "He takes the form of a dwarf who lurks on the summit of Cley Hill around dusk."

So, a well intentioned spirit, but not one to be crossed. Anyway, it's interesting to consider how these sorts of myths evolve with the telling of them, and trying to find out where these stories come from.

A final view, looking across the round barrow, as per the photo that prompted this thread, but looking in another direction. Thanks to Andrew for inspiring the visit, and for the bit of info about making counter-clockwise circuits of the mound. Didn't work, sorry to say. :wink:



Top profile

roscoe

offline

Queen Bee



Joined: 02 Dec 2006 3:44 pm
Posts: 7567

Post subject: Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow **Posted:** 10 Oct 2009 6:33 am

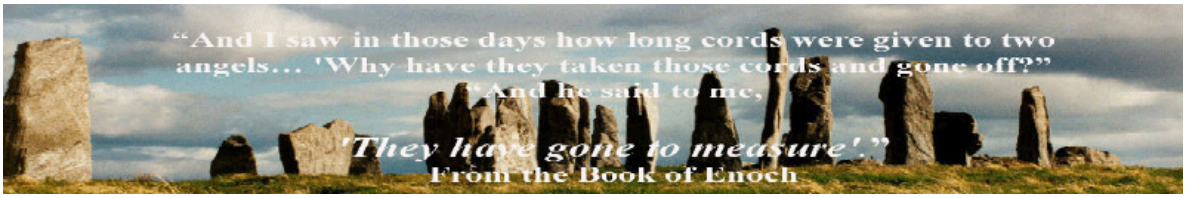
Richard keep up the good work. I'll comment further on this but the word Bogle means Ghost.

The original meaning of "boggle" was "to startle, scare or alarm". As in *"The mind Boggles"*

There's a story of a group of Scouts staying at Bogle Hole (near Robin Hood's Bay) Youth Hostel being scared by a Ghost. I'll see if I can find it. It's in a book about Yorkshire Ghosts.

At Atwick at the foot of the hill on which the church rests, a spring is said to have been haunted by a hobgoblin called the Haliwell Boggle.

No relation to the Spice Girl :wink:



CROMLECK DE RENNES is here.
It's the SUN

Top profile

richard.webster

offline

High King



Joined: 08 Apr 2008 6:44 am

Post subject: Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow **Posted:** 11 Oct 2009 10:58 am

> **roscoe wrote:**
>
> ..... the word Bogle means Ghost.
> The original meaning of "boggle" was "to startle, scare or alarm". As in *"The mind Boggles"*

Thanks, I didn't know that's what the word meant. I assumed bogle (in the context of this particular site) had derived from bugle, the nearby hamlet, and that this was an old Wessex word for something or other (probably not short trumpet), but it may be that it

Posts: 2801
Location: Winchester

was the other way round. Maybe the site of the well was originally called bogle (because of the spirit who was said to protect it) and this then got bastardised somehow to bugle.

Either way, I'm starting to think that the well may be more important to this particular equation than the barrow on the hill.

PS. Found some interesting info on White Horses, and connections between Westbury and Uffington, while looking into this, but will save that for another time and another thread.

Top profile

RenaissanceMan

Post subject: Bogglin' Bogles

Posted: 11 Oct 2009 5:19 pm

offline

Grand Master



Joined: 17 Nov 2008 8:31 pm
Posts: 748
Location: U.K.

Surely you are not talking about this cuddly little fellow



_____
www.hiddenlandscapes.co.uk

step by step we shall build it

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Sheila

Post subject: Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow

Posted: 11 Oct 2009 7:47 pm

offline

Queen Bee



Joined: 22 Mar 2007 1:57 pm
Posts: 10706
Location: France

Yo!

Renaissance chap...hello stranger...welcome back!

Top profile

RenaissanceMan

Post subject: Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow

Posted: 11 Oct 2009 8:48 pm

offline

Grand Master



Joined: 17 Nov 2008 8:31 pm
Posts: 748
Location: U.K.

Why thank you kind shepherdess.

I have been on a strange journey and arrived back where I started.

_____
www.hiddenlandscapes.co.uk

step by step we shall build it

Top profile

Sheila — **Post subject:** Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow — **Posted:** 11 Oct 2009 9:18 pm

offline

Queen Bee



Joined: 22 Mar 2007 1:57 pm
Posts: 10706
Location: France

Oh yes!

That is how it goes...shows you're on the right trail but missed a turning somewhere...

Turn off the GPS and follow your heart.

Top profile

Eginolf — **Post subject:** Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow — **Posted:** 12 Oct 2009 8:37 am

offline

High King



Joined: 04 Dec 2008 7:15 pm
Posts: 2361
Location: Vienna, Austria

> **Sheila wrote:**
> Turn off the GPS and follow your heart.



Top profile

BULLDOGNIC — **Post subject:** Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow — **Posted:** 13 Oct 2009 10:28 pm

offline

High King



Joined: 24 Apr 2008 2:43 pm
Posts: 2034

Thanks Richard
Seems like an interesting place steeped in history and legend!
Regards
Nic

Top profile

Andrew Gough — **Post subject:** Re: The Legend of Bogley Round Barrow — **Posted:** 12 Mar 2010 2:01 pm

offline

Site Owner



Joined: 17 Sep 2006 8:55 pm
Posts: 874

Don't know how I missed this. Thanks Richard!

Andrew

_____
Andrew Gough

The greatest discovery of all is the truth...

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The Legend of the Farmhouse the Devils Built - Malta InsideOut maltainsideout.com

by Marcus Grant
May 29, 2010May 30, 2010

This title of this guest post speaks for itself. Malta of old, perhaps even today, is brim full of stories, folklore, legends, superstition, tradition and ritual.

***Evarist Bartolo**, Shadow Minister for Education and a lecturer in communications at the University of Malta, writes what seems a short story. But one can't help wonder that some strange truth lies behind the episode he relates.*

As a child, I lived with my grandmother and aunt near the sanctuary in Mellieha in one of the row of troglodyte houses with the bedroom and the kitchen in caves. Only the sitting room was constructed at the mouth of the cave and provided the simple façade of the house.

The devils were all around me as a child. Our grandmother made sure we knew that. Every summer evening, enjoying the fresh breeze, we all gathered outside on the pavement and street after sunset, and after dozing for 15 minutes through the rosary, I would wake up wide eyed to listen to her telling us what used to happen a long time ago in Mellieha.

At night I used to cover my head with the sheet to try not to see the flickering red light cast across the walls by the slow paraffin cooker on which a coffee pot was put to brew slowly all night for the morning. I was sure that the red light was coming from a crack in the rock and I was even surer that the crack led to hell, deep within the earth and from which any moment a devil might come to take me away.

I had seen the picture of the death of the bad man: a desperate man was looking down to the right corner of the room where he lay dying and a devil was coming out of the ground to take him away. "Because he lived a bad life" my grandmother told me over and over again.

I became even more alarmed when one evening she decided to tell us about the farmhouse that the devils built overnight on the edge of Mellieha: in the valley on your way down to Mellieha Bay the devils had decided to build a farmhouse. They built it in a night with huge blocks of stones. I did not dare ask why the devils had decided to take up farming in Mellieha. I simply decided that there was no way I would walk to that part of the village to check for myself the builders' craftsdevilship.

I could see the devils working hard at night, cutting the big boulders, carrying them on their shoulders and building the farmhouse. I had no doubts whatsoever that the devils which looked like black and red lizards walking upright on their hind legs, dragging their long tail behind them, were very strong and could do whatever they liked, including building a large farmhouse in a night, after all they regularly dragged millions of sinners to hell where they roasted them and plunged sharp tridents into them.

So I never dared walk to the valley to see this farmhouse. I did not even know where it was exactly. Years later I chanced upon it as a teenager walking with my family when one of my sisters yelled at seeing a huge bale of straw approaching slowly over the hill. She was sure that the wizened old farmer was in fact one of the devils who had built the farmhouse and was now carrying that straw out of the silent farmhouse in the valley. Even that day I kept away from the farmhouse and decided to look at it safely from the other side of the valley.

I could understand perfectly what I read years later in Leonard Mahoney's '5000 Years of Architecture in Malta': "Superstitious farmers who tilled their lands in the vicinity never dreamt of making a closer acquaintance and so, protected by its name as much as by its solitude, it had stood unmolested for many years." Is it a hunting lodge or a cow house? What did this building serve for? Who built it? Even Leonard Mahoney fails to answer these questions. "The food troughs (or mangers) are enormous and very high from the floor; evidence, as the local folk point out, that the (devil) owner of this farmhouse kept enormous (devil?) cows."

He concedes: "But mystery wraps this building. There are no armorial bearings, or inscriptions, or even graffiti …to throw light on its original purpose or use."

My grandmother might have been right after all and while I look at the solid windowless building on my way to Mellieha Bay I have yet to visit the place and enter it.

Photo: Courtesy of Walter Lo Cascio

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Legend of the Pope Lick Monster

Thursday, October 13 2016 10:45 PM EDT

wdrb.com

Posted: Oct 13, 2013 3:57 AM PDT Updated: Oct 15, 2013 9:31 AM PDT

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) -- It's a legend that's haunted Louisville for decades. A human-goat hybrid is said to lurk near the trestle over Pope Lick Creek.

"There's a lot of innate curiosity about the legend that's continued to this day for some reason," said filmmaker Ron Schildknecht.

It's an urban legend passed down several generations. Some accounts say goatman was in a circus freak show, and constantly ridiculed. One day the circus train crashed near the trestle, and the goatman escaped full of vengeance.

"The legend is when you're running across the trestle goatman will reach up and grab your legs and hold you down until the train comes by and that's the way he gets his revenge," said a Jeffersontown resident.

He tempted the Pope Lick Monster when he ran across the 100 foot high railroad trestle at 16-years-old.

"I just thought I could out run him, it was a little after dark and I waited forever and ever to make sure there wasn't going to be a train coming," he said.

He is one of the lucky ones who made it to the other side. But several people have tested their fate on the tracks. There have been numerous deaths and many more accidents.

Schildknecht says, "When you're a 15 or 16-years-old with a great imagination you picture all kinds of things going on out here."

Schildknecht directed a low budget short film featuring the Goatman in 1988.

"During those two years there were actually two incidents where two kids died from the trestle so when the film came out naturally the railroad was very interested in the film," he said.

The film brought the urban legend alive, and called a lot of attention to the trestle.

Locals say, "If you succeed you're just a living idiot, you dont prove any points."

We want to emphasis the danger of the trestle, the railroad is still in use. Norfolk Southern Railway urges people to stay off the trestle. It is private property and it is illegal to access the trestle and those who are caught will be arrested.

- 624 W. Muhammad Ali Blvd

Louisville, KY 40203

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Lestat's tomb is getting a much-needed makeover in Lafayette Cemetery No. 1

wgno.com

Posted 11:12 PM, October 27, 2016, by Stephanie Oswald

New Orleans (WGNO) - Lafayette Cemetery No. 1 was alive Thursday night.

A second line led by the Skinz N Bonez bone gang kicked off a fundraiser in support of a very special family tomb that's getting a makeover.

The name on the tomb reads, "KARSTENDIEK" -- but it's better known as "Lestat's tomb," because Anne Rice was inspired by its intricate design and elaborate style. The regal white-but rusting cast-iron structure needs repairs inside and out, to the tune of $50,000 to $70,000, according to Amanda Walker, the Executive Director of **Save Our Cemeteries.**

The Karstendiek Family tomb is one of only 16 cast-iron tombs in New Orleans. It bears a strong resemblance to the one featured in the movie version of Rices's *Interview with the Vampire*.

"Unless someone steps in, these structures are going to fall to the ground--and unfortunately a lot of tombs have fallen to the ground. We 're the only ones doing this in New Orleans so we've got to save these treasures--and this one is very unique," says Walker.

Two members of the Karstendiek family, Pepper and Peggy, traveled from Austin, Texas to join the fundraiser--and they proudly led the second line parade.

"My great-great grandfather immigrated from Germany sometime in the 1850s. We don't have the exact papers, but we know by 1860 he was established here and that he imported the cast-iron tomb from Germany," says Pepper Karstendiek. Since discovering the family tomb by chance more than 30 years ago, they've been visiting it at least once a year.

Peggy says they have no idea who is actually buried inside, and hopes the restoration project may reveal some answers. The family is thrilled that pop culture has put a spotlight on the tomb and given it star status in New Orleans.

Pepper says they were "flabbergasted" when they learned the Karstendiek tomb had been a source of inspiration for Rice.

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Let's Blow Up The Rocks On The Road

jalopnik.com

Andrew P Collins
Yesterday 3:55pm
Filed to: Demolition



Boom! (Image: Caltrans District 9)

In Mono County, California you'll find beautiful, mountainous wildland. And sometimes those mountains drop really big boulders onto the road. For the local road workers, those are the best days on the job.

As you can see in this public service announcement, the men and women of Caltrans District 9 are charged with keeping the infrastructure operational in Mono County.

Last week, about ten big rocks fell onto State Route 120 that were too large to be moved with the service's regular tools or vehicles. So out came the bombs. At about a minute into the video, one of the Caltrans workers makes like The Joker walking out of Gotham General Hospital, running a fuse and blowing his target to splinters after hiking a safe distance away.

Watching the destruction is oddly gratifying. And educational! Now you know how those enormous rocks get moved off roads in the middle of nowhere.

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The Dangerous Dead: The Early Medieval deviant burial at Southwell, Nottinghamshire in a wider context

Matthew Beresford, BA (hons), MA

MBArchaeology Local Heritage Series, Number 3, October 2012

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Introduction

In 1959 Charles Daniels discovered the skeletal remains of an Anglo-Saxon inhumation burial whilst undertaking excavations in preparation for a new school that was to be built on Church Street, Southwell, Nottinghamshire. This burial is one of close to two hundred and fifty that have since been unearthed at the Church Street site, but it is also unique. For what Daniels discovered was a deviant burial or, to paraphrase Dr. John Blair, one of the 'dangerous dead' (Blair, 2009), because the remains had been ritually staked, with iron nails piercing the shoulders, heart and ankles (Daniels, 1965), a practice that although so far unique to Southwell, is widespread in the early Anglo-Saxon period.

Excavations at Church Street, Southwell

Ever since Major Hayman Rooke found evidence of the Roman villa in and around the Church Street site in 1787, the Saxon remains have played second fiddle. In his 1959 excavations, Daniels gained evidence relating to the bath-house of the villa in the East Wing, and of several rooms complete with mosaic floors in the South Wing. And more recent excavations at the proposed development site on Church Street by Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. (2008-09) revealed further structural remains and sections of a large stone wall probably dating to the 2nd century AD. Yet what these excavations also revealed were some of the jigsaw pieces relating to the early Saxon church and cemetery site at Southwell, a church whose whereabouts remain elusive, at least for the present.

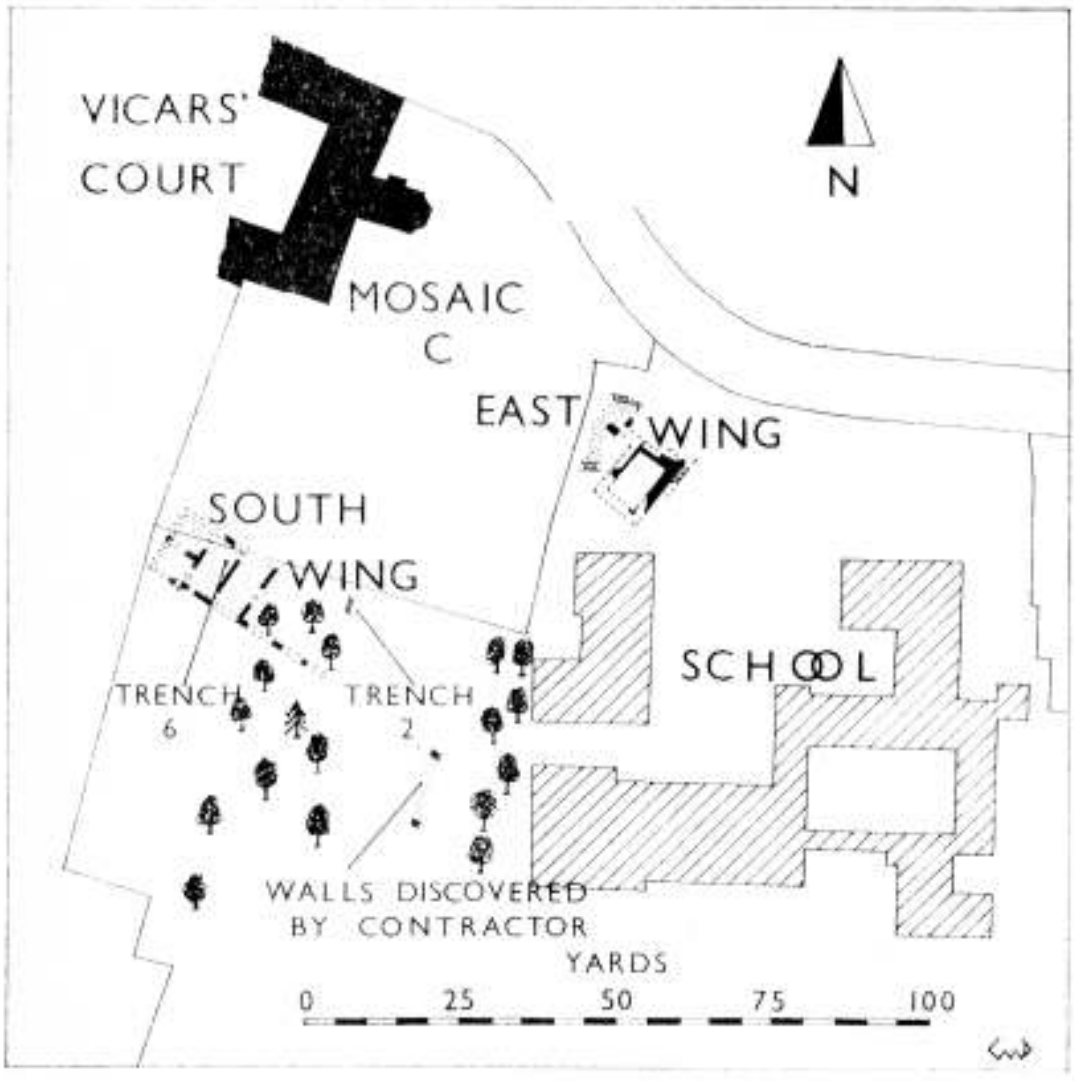


Figure 1: *Plan of the Church Street site showing location of the school, the bath-house of the Roman villa (east wing) and the south wing of the villa with Daniels' Trench 2 and 6* (Daniels, 1965)

When Daniels excavated part of the South Wing of the Roman villa (his Trench 6) he discovered the remains of later Saxon burials, of which he found thirty in the areas of rooms one and six of the villa. These were intact Christian burials (aligned east-west) or remains that had been disturbed by later ones. Trench 2, which was further to the east and close to the current development site, revealed an altogether different picture. Here two thin, diagonal trenches had been dug that cut across Roman features, and

into these the disarticulated remains of several individuals had been deposited (Daniels claims at least a dozen), with one exception. This was the deviant burial, which had been buried (or reburied) intact along with a further leg and lower arm bone (Daniels, 1965). Daniels (1965, 25) believed that in Trench 2 he was 'outside the limits of the churchyard, and dealing with something other than normal Christian internment. Without speculating wildly on the implications of the iron studs, it is known that treatment of this sort was accorded to bodies which had died unnaturally or when there was some reason to fear the supernatural'.

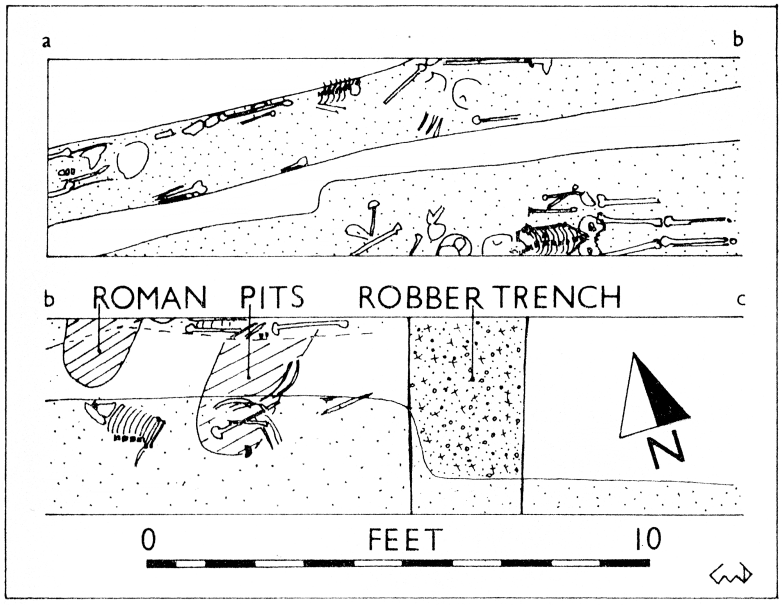


Figure 2: *Daniels' plan of Trench 2 showing Saxon ditches filled with human remains cutting through earlier Roman features. The deviant burial can be seen in section b* (Daniels, 1965)

With this evidence it seems that we could suggest the deviant burial and the disarticulated remains were buried outside the churchyard, or at least in unconsecrated grounds. Pottery fragments found by Daniels seemed to suggest an early 6th century date. Problems with Daniels' theory arose when in 1971 a watching brief was carried

out in the area just to the west of the new school, when construction work was carried out prior to an extension being built. During the work, two hundred and twenty five skeletons were discovered, reflecting that the early Saxon churchyard spread much further to the east than was first envisaged (Alvey, 1975). Supposedly, all but two or three of these were aligned east-west suggesting that this region was certainly inside the consecrated ground. More importantly, perhaps, it meant Daniels' deviant burial was now amongst standard Christian interments, suggesting there was no clear division. In 2003, another burial and further disarticulated remains were recovered during excavations at South Muskham Prebend (on the opposite side of Church Street), and excavations by the author and the Southwell Community Archaeology Group in July 2011 to the front of Kirkland and Lane Solicitors revealed part of a humerus and rib bone that may also be human. This suggests widespread burial of both intact and disarticulated remains to the east, south-east and quite some way south of the current Minster building.

During the excavations carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd, five of their twenty-four trenches revealed human remains, again some intact and others disarticulated. Trench 2 revealed an inhumation grave (Grave A), aligned east-west, that contained 'the well preserved skeleton of an adult individual, laid out extended and supine with its head to the west in the Christian tradition' (Rowe 2010, 13). This was radiocarbon dated to 1262 ±34 BP, which places it in the mid-8th century. Trench 15 revealed three inhumation graves (Graves B, C and D) and again all were aligned east-west. Grave B had a single sherd of pottery dating to the 3rd / 4th century in the grave fill, reflecting Roman occupation in the immediate vicinity. Finally, Trench 17 was the only other grave (Grave E) to have a complete burial, and this was just to the

north-west of the large Roman wall. However, disarticulated remains were recovered in Trenches 1, 17, 22 and 23 respectively, and this fits the evidence found by Daniels and on the opposite side of Church Street. The Pre-Construct report also suggested that further graves may well exist further into the central-western area (which lies inside the proposed development area).

A dump deposit seems to have been built up to the east of the large stone wall, comprising soil with a large amount of stone rubble and occasional disarticulated bones. Late Saxon / early Medieval masonry was also found near the base of the wall (Lowe, 2010) in Trench 17 in the form of a column base of Attic or Chalice style (c. 11th / 12th century). Many other pieces of masonry came from the foundations for the old school buildings, suggesting material was readily available in the 1950s, perhaps from the local garden of Vicar's Court. From this it seems that 'the large block wall appears to have remained exposed until at least the 12th century and as such a physical barrier must have existed between the burials identified within the southern wing of the villa and those east of the wall' (Rowe 2010, 34). So this evidence now recreates the divide suggested by Daniels, but also means the 225 burials from Alvey's watching brief are in the same region as the deviant burial. However, I believe we may well be looking at two, distinct periods of use for the cemetery site, as we have dating evidence for one of the burials to the east (c. mid-8th century) and John Blair (2009, 542) offers evidence that the western burials (or at least some of them) may be earlier when he argued that:

'(there were) deep-rooted fears, going far back into pre-Christian English culture (and) mounting evidence from sixth- to seventh-century cemeteries for the

deliberate disablement of corpses in precisely the ways that would later be employed by East European vampire hunters'.

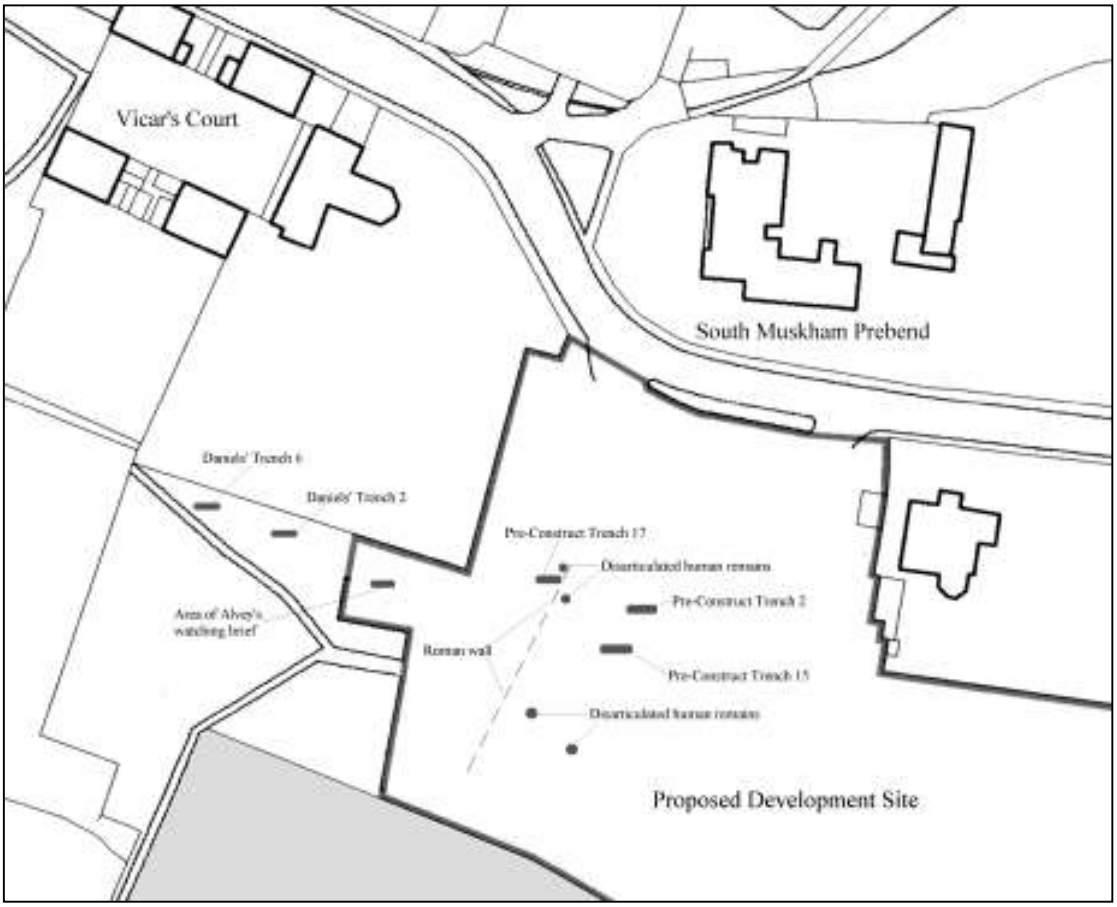


Figure 3: *Overall plan of the Proposed Development Area showing the location of known Saxon burials and evidence of disarticulated human remains* (Beresford)

What we may have, then, is an early sixth- to seventh-century use of the site to which our deviant burials relate (at least four intact with many more disarticulated), followed by a later eighth- to ninth-century use also as a burial site, and then a final period in the tenth- to eleventh-century when the existing Saxon church was demolished to make way for a Norman one, attested to by the masonry and contemporary pottery that has been found in the proposed development area.

Fearing the Dangerous Dead

John Blair (2009) gives evidence that burial rites dating to the early Saxon period show a widespread and deep-rooted fear of certain people within society returning after death. Examples of protection methods include corpse mutilation, decapitation and burial face down in the grave (Beresford 2008), whilst wider cultural practices include rocks being placed on top of the body or burial with magical talismans or amulets (Beresford, in press). We can also note that quite often the Anglo-Saxon dangerous dead were buried in bogs or waterlogged areas, such as Cwoenthryth who was 'thrown into some deep place' according to the *Vita* of St. Kenelm, the sheriff who violated St. Edmund's sanctuary and was taken from his grave, sewn in calf-skin and immersed in a pool, Abbott Brihtwold of Malmesbury who was dug up and plunged in a deep swamp, and the body of a Yorkshire rector from Byland that was 'dumped in an eerie, tree-encircled lake called Gormire' (Blair 2009). This notion of watery graves is useful to point out, as the eastern area of the Southwell cemetery site became heavily waterlogged during Pre-Construct's excavations, with water having to be continually pumped out and the site having to be abandoned at one stage (Rowe 2010). The wider area is separated by Squire's Pond and the Potwell Dyke to the south and east, and the water table must be close to the surface in the area of the proposed development site, so perhaps this was more boggy and waterlogged in Saxon times and the land notably slopes upwards from the area of the large Roman wall westwards towards the Minster and Bishop's Palace.

A more local example of the dangerous dead comes from Stapenhill in Derbyshire, and relates to two peasants whom Geoffrey of Burton documents as having plagued the local village of Drakelow after their deaths. Several villagers reportedly saw the

dead men carrying their coffins through the streets and bringing sickness with them. Their bodies were consequently dug up, the heads cut off and the hearts removed, which were then 'carried across the running water of the Trent to a place of the kind favoured by late Anglo-Saxon authorities for executing felons: a hilltop beacon above Burton at a junction of parish boundaries' (Bartlett 2002). Blair (2009, 543) believes that Anglo-Saxon England saw a 'minority of special individuals among the dead as both noxious and dangerous' and it was finding a way to stop them plaguing the living that was a very real concern. Again this can be split into two distinct periods of time, the sixth- to seventh-centuries (early) and the eighth- to ninth-centuries (late), and this may be what we are seeing at Southwell.

It is this early period that sees stakings, or at least that is what the archaeology seems to reflect, as 'some Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of c. AD550-700 contain corpses treated in curious ways…(that are), by contrast, extremely rare in normal cemeteries of the later Anglo-Saxon period…archaeologists may of course be failing to recognize heart-piercings' (Blair 2009, 549). At Southwell, the heart-piercing was indeed noticed, but the importance of it was not. And this practice of heart-piercing, or staking as we might more commonly call it, is a widespread example of a fear of the returning dead throughout history, made famous by East European accounts from the 16th and 17th centuries, the Western film industry of the 20th century and perhaps more so by Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897).

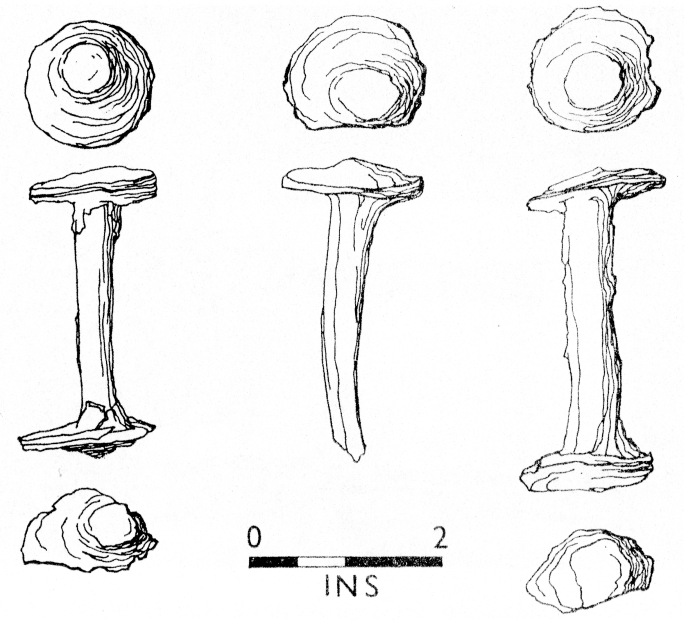


Figure 4: *Iron nails retrieved from the Southwell deviant burial during excavation by Daniels* (Daniels, 1965)

The earliest archaeological evidence for the practice comes from the site of Dolné Věstonice in Moravia (c. 27,000BP) where burial DV13, part of a triple burial, had been staked to the ground by having a thick, wooden pole inserted through his thigh and into the ground below. Oldcroghan Man, an Iron Age bog body from Ireland found in 2003 and dating to c. 362-175BC, had both his upper arms pierced with a sharp implement, after which hazel rods were inserted through the holes. Finally, his head had been cut off and he had been partially dismembered (Beresford, in press). Clearly someone wanted to prevent him from returning after death. A final example comes from the Greek island of Lesbos where Professor Hector Williams discovered a burial that had been inserted into the ancient city walls at Metholini, with heavy stones placed over the coffin. Inside the coffin was an adult male aged between 40-50 years old who had been nailed to the coffin with three, twenty centimetre long metal spikes, one through the throat, one through the pelvis and one though the ankles. The

parallels to the deviant burial at Southwell are striking. A second burial from Taxiarcus on Lesbos, discovered in 1999, was also buried with metal spikes, but these were simply placed alongside the burial rather than piercing the flesh. Perhaps the presence of the spikes was enough to counteract him returning from death.

Conclusion: Placing the Southwell burial in context

'Staking (is) unlikely to be detected in normal cemetery excavations, but a sixth-century burial at Harwell (Berks.), where a spear was driven through the heart and left protruding from the body as it lay in the grave seems a convincing parallel (to those from) Viking-Age Scandinavia' (Blair 2009, 542-53). This quote shows how important the example from Southwell is in our understanding of wider cultural practices in Early Medieval England. We can only ponder as to whether any of the 225 burials excavated by bulldozer in 1971 had a similar practice bestowed upon them. Also, the question must be raised as to whether those excavating the human remains in 2008-09 were aware of the potential of evidence of a similar vein. It seems that the Southwell deviant has disappeared along with his nails, as no trace of the remains can be found today. Curiously, Daniels commented how he could not retrieve the nail from the right shoulder as it 'lay under the side of the trench' (Daniels 1965, 25). Does this mean he did not remove the skeleton from the ground? Similarly, common knowledge attests to the fact that the 225 burials from 1971 were removed from the site, yet in Alvey's report it clearly states they were reburied in the spoil heaps to the 'west and rear of the new extension' as a result of them being 'so badly

damaged by the machine'. Whether further excavations in the area can add to the picture only time will tell.



Figure 5: *The Southwell deviant burial (left) alongside further disarticulated human remains* (Alison Wilson / University of Nottingham)

So, why Southwell, and why does there seem to be re-deposition of so many disarticulated human remains? We know that an early foundation for the Minster dates to at least the tenth century but it seems highly likely that there was a church on the site for quite some time previously. A clue may come from a list of Saxon saints from AD1014 which shows that St. Eadburh, Abbess of Repton in Derbyshire in the 7th century, was interred at the Minster (Beaumont 1994). Why so? Possibly she was moved there from Repton prior to the Viking threat when the Great Army over-wintered there, but this was in the winter of AD873-74. Does this suggest that there

was already an established Saxon church at Southwell before AD873? It would appear so, and that fits perfectly with our early cemetery stage. More to the point is why choose Southwell over other local towns? We know why the Minster was eventually built there, and we have the suggestion that the Roman villa was of a very large design and possibly the large stone wall relates to an early religious temple site, but what happened in between? I would suggest that the Roman site was of religious importance (much like the site of Chedworth near Cirencester, which also bears evidence of bath-houses, fine mosaics and a water-shrine) and that the establishment of an early Saxon church reaffirmed this. Perhaps Southwell was a religious centre in both Roman and Saxon times, something that continued into the Medieval period with the construction of the Minster itself.

We cannot be sure at this stage why Southwell was so important from a religious perspective, but its name alone could well reflect a link with religion and water, the South Well. What if this was a holy well, relating directly to the Roman villa (and we have the evidence of the bath-house) and was a theme that carried through into Saxon times. There is the statement from the Anglo-Saxon chronicler Bede who told how St. Paulinus baptised people in the Trent, but Bryn Walters put forward his argument at the recent Symposium in Southwell (Tuesday 29th April, 2011) that it may in fact have occurred at Southwell in the river that existed east of the Minster (what would now be the Potwell Dyke). Recent excavations by the University of Nottingham at several sites along Farthingate at Southwell revealed deposits of tufa (a variety of limestone caused by precipitation of minerals by water) at around 40-50cm below the present ground level, and excavation by the author and the Southwell Community Archaeology Group at number 22 Farthingate also uncovered tufa deposits along with

Roman, Saxon and Medieval pottery fragments. What this may suggest is that the slightly elevated area of Farthingate was, in essence, a low-lying riverbank with an area of waterlogged ground to the north-west (the present day playing field, see Figure 6). This theory is supported by the fact that test pits by the University of Nottingham in the summer of 2011 on the playing field just to the south-west of the development area (and the Saxon cemetery) revealed no archaeology, but if this area was underwater or at least waterlogged in Roman and Saxon times this is to be expected.

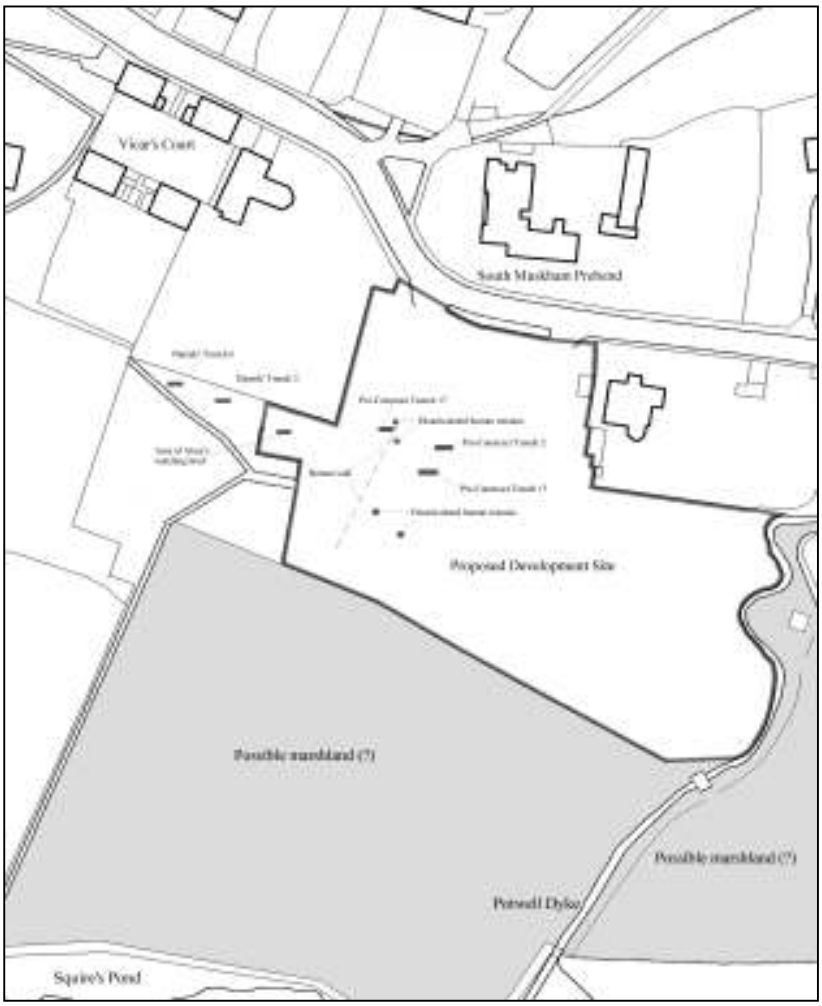


Figure 6: *Area of possible marshland surrounding the Church Street site with the Potwell Dyke at its centre and Farthingate as its eastern bank* (Beresford)

Although the water element relating to St. Paulinus is of a positive vein, widespread belief in early Saxon times could also attribute a negative one. Sarah Semple (2003) discusses the common practice of burial in water-logged places and suggests this creates an element of being 'trapped' on (or in) the earth, an eternal damnation and perhaps relating to hell. Are the dug-up and re-buried remains at Southwell being flung into unhallowed ground then? 'It is possible that some of the prone and decapitated corpses excavated on such sites are not execution victims (as widely believed), but have been brought from elsewhere and treated in this fashion, after death or primary burial' (Blair 2009, 552). From the mid-tenth century onwards we see the practice of consecrating graveyards, cleansing the ground and keeping the evil spirits at bay – why do this if not through a fear of the returning dead? The classic portrayal of the Dangerous Dead (more commonly known today as the vampire) is an undead corpse arising from the grave and all the accounts from this period, particularly those of William of Newburgh, c. 12th century, reflect this. Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period the 'punishment' of being buried in water-logged ground, face down, decapitated, staked or otherwise was reserved for thieves, murderers or traitors and later for those 'deviants' who did not conform to society's rules: adulterers, disrupters of the peace, the unpious or oath-breaker. Which of these the Southwell deviant was we will never know, but nevertheless he provides a fascinating glimpse into the period of Southwell's history that would have been known until fairly recently as, quite poignantly, the Dark Ages.

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11:36, 20 Oct 2016 Updated 12:18, 20 Oct 2016 By Nicola Oakley dailyrecord.co.uk

Little girl begs crew on huge ship to toot its horn - instantly realises it was a big mistake



We've all had moments in life where we've insisted we know what's best for us, then immediately learned that we were totally wrong.

And this little girl is no exception.

She really, really wanted a huge ship to toot its horn as a bit of a 'hello' as she stood waving at it from the harbour.

But she soon learned that she shouldn't have begged them to do it.

In the hilarious clip, the cute tot repeatedly motions with her arm, signalling the crew to 'beep' at her.



Youtube/TobiasHansson

The look of regret.

After a good 20 seconds or so of doing it, the team on the ship give in and honk.

This is when she immediately regrets her decision.

It's so loud, she gets the fright of her life and runs away with a horrified look on her face as adults around her chuckle.

Poor girl, she'll probably be scared of boats for life after this.

The video, taken in Sweden, was uploaded to YouTube four years ago but has gone viral on the site again in recent days.

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Halloween Horror Post #2: The woman who survived premature burial

strangeremains.com

By strangeremains*on*October 2, 20160



Antoine Wiertz painting entitled Premature Burial . Image credit: Wikipedia

Frightening stories of people who were accidentally buried alive, also known as premature burial, have been repeated around fireplaces and reported in newspapers since the 18th century. True or not, these tales really scared a lot of people so families went to extreme measures to make sure someone was really dead. People buried loved ones in safety coffins, coffins that were constructed with devices that allowed an occupant to signal to the surface they had been buried alive, or placed them in dead houses, structures where bodies were stored until they started to decompose.

The widespread fear of being buried alive, also known as taphophobia, eventually emerged as an urban legend known as the “Lady with the Ring.” This legend has variations told throughout Europe and common features, besides premature burial, include an expensive ring and grave robbers. But one of these “Lady with the Ring’ tales went beyond legend and left its mark in an Irish cemetery.

In Shankill Cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries in Belfast, there is a grave marker for a woman named Margorie McCall that has the following inscription, “Lived Once, Buried Twice.”

Margorie McCall resided in the town of Lurgan with her husband, John McCall, about 300 years ago. She came down with a sudden illness in 1705 and seemed to die. During the wake, her loved ones tried to remove an expensive ring from her finger because they feared it would attract grave robbers. But the band didn’t budge and Margorie was buried in Shankill Cemetery with it on her hand.

Grave robbers found out about Margorie’s expensive ring and went to the cemetery the night after she was interred to dig up her grave. When they failed to pry it off her hand, one of the grave robbers pulled out a knife to cut off her finger. As soon as the blade cut Margorie’s finger and drew blood, she woke up from her deep sleep with a start. This scared the crap out of the grave robbers and they immediately ran off. She then climbed out of her coffin and walked home.

Margorie’s family sat around the hearth talking and mourning her loss when they heard a knock at the door. John opened the door and saw his wife standing in the doorway in her dirty funeral clothes.

Margorie McCall supposedly lived for years after this and even had children after the traumatizing event. According to the tale, when she died for real, she was buried in the same plot she climbed out of in 1705.

Mark McConville and Denise Calnan interviewed Jim Conway, a local historian, for an article they wrote for the *Independent*. Conway researched parish records in Lurgan and found records for the deaths of nine Margorie McCalls, three of which were married to a John McCall. But he could not find any evidence of a Margorie McCall who was married to a John McCall and died in 1705. Despite this, Conway believes this story is true because parish records may not have been accurate because of a famine.

Read about tales of premature burial that were reported in newspapers from the 18th to the 20th centuries.

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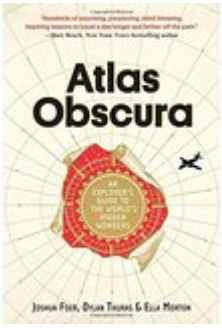


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The Long Death of Product 19, the Most Beloved Cereal You've Never Heard Of

atlasobscura.com



Despite a devoted fanbase, it has disappeared.

by Eric Grundhauser
November 07, 2016



When you hear the name "Product 19," you'll either flash on an experimental invention from some corporate R&D department, or, if you're one of its fans, you might think of the health cereal, rare in the aisles of American supermarkets yet loved all the same.

But earlier this month, Kellogg's announced that it had officially discontinued the cereal. While most people these days seemed to barely know of its existence, Product 19 died a slow, oaty, fade to black, leaving devoted fans desperate.

"PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE don't discontinue this cereal," one fan wrote on Kellogg's community boards a few months ago. "I LOVE LOVE LOVE this cereal!"

What was Product 19, though? For nearly 50 years, it was simply an answer to a business problem, first released in 1967 as Kellogg's answer to General Mills' Total, which had hit the market six years prior. As the current slogan still contends, Total aimed to provide 100% of the daily amounts of nutrients like vitamin E, calcium, iron, and more. Kellogg's needed something to compete with this healthy new blockbuster, so they began attempting to develop a vitamin cereal of their own, eventually settling on Product 19.

The name, immediately, was a bit curious, and its origins, perhaps fittingly, remain apocryphal. According to one story, it was so named because the end product was the 19th iteration of the cereal they were developing. Others say it was simply the 19th product Kellogg's developed that year. Either way, Product 19 stuck, a workmanlike name that echoed what the cereal promised to do: provide a base of nutrition, nothing more or less.

The cereal was made up of flakes made from a combination of lightly sweetened corn, wheat, oats, and rice, and promoted itself as providing the full daily amounts of "Multivitamins and Iron." On the more modern boxes, this would be specified as, "Vitamin E, Folic Acid, Iron, and Zinc." The original box was so covered in charts and blocks of text, it truly looked more like some experimental substance than a breakfast cereal.

Product 19 sold itself as a cereal for health-minded adults and older people, barking about how the cereal would make you feel young again. According to MrBreakfast.com, the cereal's original slogan was, "Instant Nutrition - New cereal food created especially for working mothers, otherwise busy



mothers and everybody in a hurry." However the focus of their marketing quickly shifted. In the early 1970s, Product 19 used former Heisman trophy winner, Tom "Old 98" Harmon, then in his 50s, as its spokesman in a series of television commercials. He presented the cereal as a part of the wellness routine he used to stay active. At the same time, Total was rolling out its now iconic commercials featuring a comparison of how many bowls of a competing cereal it would take to get the same vitamins.

And whether it was due to marketing or flavor, Product 19 never gained the household name recognition of competitors like Total, or even Special K, but the cereal did manage to hold on to a devoted fan base. Updating its brand throughout the years to sell itself to younger consumers (the most modern package featured the image of someone doing yoga), the cereal maintained a presence on store shelves through the 2000s, sticking with its simple red and white motif and industrial name. But as sales of Product 19 began to slump, it began slowly disappearing from stores. In a thread from 2014 on Kellogg's official product forums, a Product 19 fanatic pleaded that the cereal not be taken from shelves, but an official rep responded that Product 19 had gone into limited distribution.

Facebook groups like "Bring Back Kellogg's Product 19" began popping up around the same time, with people posting images of the final remaining boxes of the cereal they found on store shelves. Then it stopped.

Without much action on social media in the two years since Product 19 went into decline, Kellogg's released a statement officially declaring that Product 19 had been discontinued. The statement reads in part, "We are sorry to announce that Kellogg's Product 19 cereal has been discontinued. Unfortunately, sales of this cereal were not strong enough to support continued production, so we had to make the difficult decision to discontinue it."

Despite a nearly 50 year history as an underdog of the healthy cereal market, Product 19 has gone the way of so many other beloved breakfasts, passing into the Great Lunchtime. But to its diehard fans, no substitution will ever taste the same.

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BDN Portland

A conversation about Portland, Maine

BDN Maine

Longfellow's parents are missing from their Portland tomb

September 30, 2016, , , , , ,
By Troy R. Bennett

Stephen & Zilpha Longfellow, Missing parents of the poet
Died 1849 and 1851

Happy October, folks. The air is crisp, the skies are blue and it's time for stories that open the door between this world and the next. I'm posting a video each day, telling the tale of one, interesting "permanent Portlander."

Today, it's a tale of two missing bodies. Stephen and Zilpha Longfellow were the parents of Maine's most famous poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. They lived in what's known as the Longfellow House on Congress Street.

On a side note, Stephen was originally engaged to her sister, Elizabeth, but she died before they could get hitched. So, he married Zilpha instead.

Anyway, they had a long happy life together and raised six children. Stephen died in 1849 and Zilpha followed in 1851. They were both laid to rest in the granite family tomb in Portland's Western Cemetery.

But, in 1986, city workers entered the tomb while replacing the old iron gate and preparing to brick-up the door. The tomb was empty. There was no sign of vandalism and the lock was intact.

So, where did they go? Nobody knows.

Disclaimer: I'm not a historian. I owe everything I know to the dedicated research of those who have come before me. These character sketches are assembled from multiple (often antique) sources and sprinkled with my own conjecture.

About Troy R. Bennett





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Creepy LA: The Los Angeles Halloween Blog

Los Angeles: City of Hexes and Curses!

October 17, 2016

In 1968, Louise Huebner cast a spell from the Hollywood Bowl to increase the "sexual vitality of the County of Los Angeles." One week before, County Supervisor Ernest Debs had given Huebner the title of the Official Witch of Los Angeles. Soon thereafter, as Huebner was making the rounds in local press, the supervisor's office recanted, saying the title was just a gag and sent her a cease and desist letter to stop using the title. Huebner responded, threatening to "de-spell" the County, saying, ""What with smog and freeways being what they are, I shudder to think of what the De-Spelling could do to devastate the County."

The County took no further action, and when Huebner passed away in September 2014, she took her title as the first and only Official Witch of Los Angeles with her, and along with it, her curse.

While that crisis may have been averted, there are still other curses afflicting the City of Angels, put on us by vexed residents. All this sunshine doesn't come without a price, I suppose.

Here's a look at the curses affecting Los Angeles:

- The most well known curse in Los Angeles is the one placed over Griffith Park by the niece of ranch owner Don Los Feliz, who, in 1863, was so upset she didn't receive the land when he died that she placed a hex over all future land owners. The land, which became Griffith Park, has been plagued by fire and drought, and those associated in the transfer and ownership of land have had a bad history of being shot or killed. Colonel Griffith J. Griffith, who late in his life gifted the land to the City of Los Angeles, was shot himself by a business rival, and later shot his own wife in a drunken stupor (she survived).
- In the mid-1800s, William Money, the founder of the Moneyan Institute, LA's first commune, placed a curse on Los Angeles for it to fall into the ocean after local newspaper refused to print some of his apocalyptic predictions.
- Rudolph Valentino has been said to still haunt several of his former homes and playspots around Los Angeles as his spirit hunts for a ring, believed to be cursed, that belonged to him in life that is now considered missing. After he died, his ring was passed on to his lover, who became gravely ill in its possession. She passed it onto an actor friend, who was shot to death days later. Another owner fatally hit by a truck. A burglar was shot and killed by a cop during an attempted burglary of the ring, and a bank where the ring was held "faced two robberies, a fire, and a cashier's strike," and has since gone missing. Read more of this tale at Blumhouse.com.
- Several injuries and even the untimely deaths of several players has been attributed to a curse that was on The Los Angeles Angeles from the mid-'70s til they won the World Series in 2002, allegedly due to the Anaheim stadium having been built on a Native American burial ground. The LA Weekly consulted a shaman to confirm if the LA Lakers are cursed. There is mounting evidence that the LA Clippers are also cursed. (I supposed only time will tell if the Rams will suffer the same fate).

By the way, if you're personally hit with a curse, Los Angeles based witch "Cauldron Kitty" has a $289 "curse removal spell." She takes MasterCard and Visa.

David Markland

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Was Europe's Mars lander SHOT DOWN by Nasa?

06:47 EST, 21 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

- **The 'soft landing' of the Schiaparelli probe this week is likely to have failed**
- **ESA has not received any signal from its experimental Mars lander**
- **The space agency believes the parachute may have 'jettisoned too early'**
- **A UFO hunter believes that it was the the American space agency**

By Libby Plummer For Mailonline

The European Space Agency lost contact with it Mars lander this week - and one man thinks he knows why.

UFO hunter Scott Waring believes that the disappearance is part of a wider conspiracy and holds Nasa responsible.

The unlikely claim was made in a blog post on his UFO Sightings Daily.com site a day after ESA lost contact with the Mars lander on Wednesday.

Scroll down for video

Artist's impression of the Schiaparelli lander in one piece on the Martian surface. Scientists are sifting through large amounts of data transmitted by Schiaparelli until the signal was abruptly cut off

At 15:42 BST on Wednesday, Schiaparelli entered the Martian atmosphere at a speed of 13,000 mph (21,000 km/h).

A minute later, at 15:43 BST, a heat shield protected the lander during its atmospheric deceleration.

At 15:44 BST, the probe deployed its parachute at altitude of about 6.8 miles (11km) having been slowed by the friction on its heat shield down to 1,055 mph (1,700km/h).

At 15:46 BST the lander released its parachute about 30 seconds earlier than expected.

As it neared the ground, around 15:47 BST, three clusters of retro rockets fired, slowing the craft's speed. But the rockets only fired for three to four seconds, compared to the expected 30 seconds.

Around 20 seconds later, about 50 seconds before the anticipated touch down at 15:48, transmission from the lander went silent.

This is when Schiaparelli may have hit the ground at a high speed, instead of the planned soft landing.

'NASA did it again, but this time they somehow sabotaged our European neighbors, our allies, our friends,' said Mr Carey.

'But when it comes to which country will announce that they found life first and make it into the history books forever...NASA has a choke hold on the world'.

ESA says it still has not received any signal from its experimental Mars lander since shortly before it was meant to reach the red planet's surface.

That means the planned 'soft landing' of the Schiaparelli probe this week is likely to have failed, as the parachute may have 'jettisoned too early' - though there is no confirmation of this yet.

The head of ESA, Jan Woerner, said yesterday the mission should still be considered a success, because the probe sent a vast amount of data back to Earth before falling silent.

Mr Carey believes that the disappearance of the ESA's lander is the latest in a series of deliberate actions by the American space agency.

He also accused Nasa of destroying the Russian Phobos probe in 1989 as well as the Phobos-Grunt lander in 2011.

The keen Ufologist believes that the space agency has now turned its attention to Europe in a bid to stop other nations reaching Mars.

The planned 'soft landing' of the Schiaparelli probe this week is likely to have failed, though there is no confirmation of this yet, as the parachute (artist's impression) 'jettisoned too early'

Artist's impression of the Schiaparelli lander detaching from the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter. Schiaparelli separated from its own mothership, the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter, on Sunday after a 310 million mile (500 million km) seven-month journey through space

'Now there is no way Nasa will permit any other country to get the first fibs on discovering life on Mars', he said.

He described these alleged acts of sabotage as a 'crime against humanity' that should be heard by the United Nations.

'There does seem to be a Mars Curse, as two-thirds of missions to this planet have failed,' Nigel Watson, author of the UFO Investigations Manual, told MailOnline.

'Even Nasa scientists jokingly call it the great 'Galactic Ghoul'.

'Though this is more due to the difficulty of landing on the Martian surface than alien space activity or sabotage by rival nations'.

'When the Chinese Jade Rabbit rover landed on the Moon in December 2013, conspiracy theorists thought it was either nobbled by aliens or the USA.

'This was to prevent the robot from discovering bases and other secret technology on the surface of the Moon.

'The official story was that the extreme cold froze some of its components, preventing it from travelling more than 20 metres from its landing point'.

Employees sit in the contol centre of the European Space Agency (ESA) in Darmstadt Germany. The signal from Mars Express came through at 6.30pm and confirmed exactly the same as the initial signal picked up by the telescope in Pune

Jan Woerner, Director of the European Space Agency (ESA) during a press conference this week at the European Space Agency (ESA) in Darmstadt, Germany

ESA discuss the ExoMars landing sequence after bold Mars mission

THE FAILED MISSIONS TO MARS: BEAGLE 2 AND OTHERS

The only previous European Space Agency (Esa) spacecraft to attempt a Mars landing was the ill-fated British-built Beagle 2 on Christmas Day in 2003.

After separating from the Mars Express orbiter that carried it to the red Planet, Beagle 2 was not heard from again.

It was not until 2015 that scientists discovered the Beagle had landed, but could not communicate after failing to deploy solar panels.

Esa isn't the only space agency to lose a spacecraft on the way to Mars.

Part of Nasa's Mariner mission, the Mariner 8 was supposed to send images and data back from the red planet.

Instead, a launch failure in 1971 meant that it ended up in the Atlantic Ocean without making it into space.

An artist's impression showing how the Beagle 2 landing craft may look once it landed on Mars

In 1999, Nasa's Mars Climate Orbiter disintegrated in the Martian atmosphere.

The space probe ventured to close to the atmosphere following a software programming error.

Following the successful launch the Sputnik satellite, the Soviets attempted to send the Mars1M to the red planet in 1960m but a technical failure shortly after take off meant that it broke up before it reached orbit, and a second launch, the Mars 1M No. 2, also failed.

In 1962, the Sputnik 22 probe, was lost in low Earth orbit, while both Sputnik 23 and and 24 also failed to make it to Mars.

In 1969, the Soviets' Mars 1969A exploded shortly after launch over the Altai Mountains.

A month later, the Mars 1969B suffered a similar fate, crashing back to the ground just 41 seconds after launch.

In 1971, the Kosmos 419 also failed to make it out of low Earth orbit.

Later that year, the Soviets' Mars 2 lander made it to the red planet but crashed and was lost.

A series of failures followed, ending with Mars 7.

After launching in 2011, China's Yinghuo-1, which was the country's first and only attempt at reaching Mars, failed to make it out of Earth orbit and eventually broke up over the POacific Ocean.

In 1998, Japan launched the Nozomi probe, which made it to Mars in 2003, but failed to make it into Martian orbit.

Contact was later lost.



Comments (

gimblegoodna, Brisbane, Australia, 40 minutes ago

Some of these conspiracy theorists are tools.

Foto, Omaha, United States, about an hour ago

He's a loony.

Allec, Charleston, United States, about 2 hours ago

wow, i am impressed, didnt know we had that military capability on mars, seriously what nonsense

JEO T, Pensacola, United States, about 2 hours ago

Why do you publish this nonsense?

Cystalball, Toronto, Canada, about 2 hours ago

No way. It was an alien space ship that shot it down. I can guarantee it.

Dr Leevil, Leicester, about 2 hours ago

NASA gave beagle 2 the wrong landing coordinates sending it into a chasm. How foolish would NASA have looked if the Uk's budget lander had got to Mars before their billion dollar project.

webfoot, Portland, United States, about an hour ago

The Beagle 2 landed perfectly - it failed because its solar panels failed to deploy properly.

Renassance man, Tonbridge, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

Maybe it was the clangers...as in they dropped one.

steve, kidderminster, United Kingdom, about 4 hours ago

your right there is a conspiracy! they encourage idiots like you to focus on this crap so that you miss the really important stuff that they actually are doing!!!!!!!

Barbidex, Burnham Market, United Kingdom, about 4 hours ago

Nut Job, not even worth a laugh.

Barbidex, Burnham Market, United Kingdom, about 4 hours ago

Nut Job, not even worth a laugh.

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Lost Ship of the Desert - Weird California

weirdca.com

Weird California

Lost Ship of the Desert

Map showing the location of the Salton Sea - taken from Wikipedia



Map showing the location of the Salton Sea - taken from Wikipedia

In the 1800's, many stories began circulating throughout Southern California and beyond about a spectral ship lying half buried in the desert sands. Around that time, many migrants after Civil War passed through the desert on their way to California. Many reported that they saw a multi mast Spanish galleon. Multiple expeditions left looking for the ship, but none found it. Some claimed it was Noah's Ark. Many more claimed that it was loaded with pearls, a fortune's worth, millions of dollars worth of exquisite pearls.

In 1610, King Phillip III of Spain ordered Alvarez de Cordone to search the Western coast of Mexico and recover the pearls residing there. Cordone hired two other captains, Juan de Iturbe and Pedro de Rosales. He also hired sixty pearl divers and began having three ships build. By July 1612 they set sail to plunder the west coast of its precious oysters.

Over and over again the ship would pause in its travels so the pearl divers could jump off the ship and return with the oysters they discovered on the ocean floor. But the going was slow. Eventually they discovered a Native American village and stopped, meeting with the village leaders. They discovered that the Native Americans had baskets of the pearls just lying about and they formulated a trade of their rich fancy European clothing for the pearls. However, the Spanish swindled the Native Americans and traded them only rags and dirty cloths. The Native Americans outraged attacked the ship as it was trying to set sail. Cordone was hit by an arrow and lay ill. His ship was forced to turn around, but he ordered the other two on in search of more pearls, commanding them to look up the Gulf of California.

As they journeyed up the Gulf, Rosales's ship struck a reef. The cargo was rapidly transferred to Iturbe's ship and they continued on. One story says that Rosales's ship was sunk in a terrible storm. With one ship remaining they sailed up the Gulf and eventually up the Colorado River and into the Salton Sea (or the Blake Sea or Lake Cahuilla as it may have been called long ago).

Here there's some slight departures in the story. Some stories claim that Iturbe (or another Spanish ship) sailed into the Salton Sea to find the legendary Straits of Anian, an all water route from the Gulf of California to the Gulf of Mexico. Some stories claim that the Salton Sea and the Colorado River were higher and filled with water at the time. Supposedly this was during an unusual flooding season. Others claim that after Iturbe had sailed from the Gulf of California and into the Salton Sea, an earthquake happened, closing off what remained of the Salton Sea from the ocean. Regardless, when Iturbe or whatever Spanish ship had sailed into the Salton Sea, turned around to try and head

back home, they were dismayed to find that it was closed off. In fact, with the outlet to the ocean blocked, the water their ship was currently in was rapidly evaporating. The water slowly receded and eventually the ship was beached on the California desert, many many miles from the ocean. The ship was abandoned, the crew grabbing what few supplies they could carry and they trudged west towards the water. Supposedly four months later the survivors were finally picked up

Other versions of the tale, involve a pirate ship loaded down with almost a million doubloons. Another story states that the ship is one of the ships from King Solomon's navy, carrying the ten lost tribes of Israel to North America. Yet another claims the ship to be from a war like tribe formerly located in the Indian Ocean.

Another puts the Spanish galleon on Lake Cahuilla, supposedly another name for the large inland sea that eventually became the Salton Sea. Lake Cahuilla existed in the 16th century and had a tribe of Native Americans living in the area at the time. Knowing that the Spanish were coming to take their treasures and probably hurt the tribe, the Cahuilla Indians instead ambushed the Spanish party that came ashore from the ship. Then the tribe mounted a full attack on the galleon and after a fierce battle, annihilated all the crew on board claiming the ship for the tribe. The Cahuillas began looting the ship of the clothes, foods, and exotic items that the Spanish had brought with them, but they could not move nor break into the heavy large iron chests that were in the hold. While they were debating what to do with the treasure chests a storm brewed up, and began attacking the galleon. The Native Americans were forced to desert the ship which broke from its anchor, drifted off into the storm, overturned and soon sunk into the sea taking its precious cargo with it. By the time the lake supposedly dried up, the ship had been long buried under tons of dirt, sand and silt.

The Lost Viking Ship

Quite possibly buried in the 1933 earthquake, a lost Viking Ship apparently resides in the Anza Borrego Desert State Park in San Diego County. In 1933, near Agua Caliente Springs, Louis and Myrtle Botts from the small town of Julian under directions from a strange prospector they had met the night before, stumbled upon the forward half of an old viking ship sticking part way out of the mountains in Tierra Blanco Canyon. Sadly shortly after they discovered it and before they could take any photographic evidence, a huge earthquake occurred and covered up the finding.

Strangely enough, Native American legends actually support the theory that a Viking ship made it all the way around Canada, through the Arctic Circle and down the west coast. The Seri Indians' legend states that the "Come From Afar Men" arrived in a long boat with a head like a snake. These men apparently all had yellow beards and hair. They were also accompanied by a red haired woman.

The Mayo Indians also have legends involving a possible Viking Ship. Their legend states that the ship sank off the coast and that the Mayo Indians took in the survivors. These survivors inter married with the tribe and this is the reason why even today occasionally descendants of the Mayo Indians are born with blonde hair and blue eyes.

So just like a lost Spanish Galleon loaded up with pearls, a lost Viking Ship buried under rubble might exist in San Diego County.

Lastly, one story discusses a viking ship that could be found sticking out of the side of a mountain in the Tierra Blanco Canyon near Agua Caliente Springs. Legends of Native Americans speak of the

arrival of the visitors that supposedly had a boat with the head of a snake on it. Sightings of the mysterious viking ship apparently ended after a 1933 earthquake. (see sidebar)

How true could this story be? It is surprisingly possible that a flood occurred connecting the Salton Sea to the Gulf of California. Supposedly in the past the two were connected at one time. The area between the desert and the gulf has the potential to be hit with massive flooding. And it would have been plausible for a ship to get carried in on the waves and the stranded afterwards as the water receded. Additionally the waters there have been known in the past to have strange tidal bores that would sweep waves in land. A ship could have been carried inland by one of those. However, it must be from the sheer number of stories and legends told by both Native Americans and frontiersmen, that makes this story quite possibly true.

In the 1800s the legends, stories, and failed expeditions began. Some claimed that the ship seen in the desert was haunted and could only be found at certain times of the year. Native Americans told tales about it, which was apparently good enough to confirm its existence. One group claimed that the ship came from 1862 when several people built a twenty-one foot single mast skiff mounted on wheels to transport themselves across the desert. Sadly when they reached the lowest point in the desert, they were forced to abandon the ship and continue on without it. They claim that the ship people saw in the desert was their abandoned wheel mounted skiff.

In 1870 several Indians reported seeing the ship, supplying a location of approximately 30 miles west of Dos Palmas and 40 miles north of the then San Bernardino - Yuma road.

1870 continued to bring attention to the ship in the form of a series of stories in the Los Angeles Star on November 12th and December 1st of 1870. The stories spoke of a man named Charley Clusker who claimed to have located the ship and was organizing several expeditions to return to it and bring back the missing ship which he claimed was filled with crosses and had broken masts. It was reportedly fifty miles or more from Dos Palmas in a region of boiling mud springs. Sadly there was nothing afterwards, and Mr. Clusker appears to have simply disappeared much like the elusive ship.

In 1878, three German prospectors saw the ship around sundown about 120 miles northwest of Yuma and 40 miles east of Indio. The two survivors reported seeing an immense ship under full sail, floating over the desert, sailing like a cloud into the sunset. One of the three prospectors went after it the next morning, but never returned. A rescue party eventually found him dead from lack of water and strangely naked. Later one old timer, reportedly spent several days camping inside the slowly rotting hull of the old galleon, completely unaware of the pearls and immense wealth that lay buried under the sand beneath him. Obviously, he was never able to relocated the derelict ship.

In 1905, a prospector named Butcherknife Ike, claimed to have discovered a fossil ship buried in the sand dunes of Borrego Springs. And in 1915, a Yuma Indian arrived in one town paying for his merchandise with pearls. After being questioned, he claimed to have spent the night in a strangely shaped wooden house that was partially covered by sand. The people he spoke to offered him several hundreds of dollars plus a place to sleep for the night if he would take them back there in the morning. He agreed, collected his pay, agreed to be lodged for the night, and was no where to be seen come morning, having completely vanished.

In 1933, Antonio de Fierro Blanco wrote a book that discussed the story of Tiburcio Manquerna, a young mule driver who had apparently come across the lost Spanish Galleon. At the time Tiburcio was operating as a mule driver for Juan Baptista de Anza who was searching for a land route from

Sonora to Alta California. He even went into the hold of the ship, saw the pearls, but was never able to relocate the evasive ship. These events occurred around 1775.

Even as early as 1949, three UCLA students, armed with old newspaper accounts, 1910 Imperial Irrigation District Maps, and old stories from Cahuilla Indians, went out to search for a Viking ship. The Los Angeles Times reported the undertaking, but sadly never told the results of the expedition, which leads me to believe that like so many others before, it too met in failure. Many treasure hunters have gone after the missing treasure of pearls. None has brought back evidence of finding it. One of the presumed reasons for this, is that the sands of the desert shift sometimes moving or obscuring or revealing the lost ship.

And of course a ghost story has sprung up around the incident. According to story tellers, the ship itself, now bleached white and desiccated by the whipping sands blown by the desert winds, has become a ghost. With an eerie other-world glow and singing dead sailors, the skeleton of a ghost ship sails the desert. often being seen sailing into the sunset or along the moonlight. Of course, ghost stories are often in dispute, as another ghost tale places the phantom ship near Kane Springs, and the ship doesn't make a sound as it glides silently pass. Nor are any sailors in view.

Does the mysterious ship laden with a fortune in pearls still reside in the desert? Or is it simply a strange story that has been passed down through the decades? Does it still sail spectrally over the sands, heading off into the sunset? Perhaps one day, when the sands blow the correct way, we'll be lucky enough to find out.

For an actual ship that sailed the deserts of the Mojave in the 1940s, see The Muroc Maru.

Comments:

- Sharon of CA on 2015-09-02 said:

How come no one will tell where this ship is located. If it's true that National Geographic excavated the site, then why not tell where it's at since there isn't anything of value there anymore, but I for one would love to see a Spanish galleon in the middle of the desert.

- Steven Tenbears of Jackson, Ca on 2015-01-16 said:

There were many ships that made it to the Salten Sink as it was part of the Salten Sea. Look at the water line marks all around the mtns and the giant 4 ft long fish fossils embedded as well as 3ft snail fossils. factoid. There was one English privateer named the Content" a mutinied ship under the command of Captn Cavidish.. one of the queens sea dogs.. he captured the Santa Anna (600 tons) in San Lucas.. Cabo now.. they split the loot (2 million gold manilla peso's) onto the Desire and the Content.. 3 masted english Barkintines.. to avid a mutiny, Cavindish let the Content go here merry way..and they did ..north ..never to be seen again (1580) until the 1930's ...rail guns or swivel guns found from the Content.. clearly marked.. fact. The government promptly seized the guns Prior to all this A mast was found nearby buried up to 6 feet showing and cut off by my friend..now gone. carbon dated 1480.. allowing for an old tree from England to be cut around 1580.. the Content disappeared in 1587.. I know where the mast was cut and the rails guns were found.. anyone that want to comment. I am at Orovada@aol.com

- ginny white of Antioch, CA on 2014-09-24 said:

hi you all i have heard this story for many years. infact i had a friend who was frineds with some of the Indians that lived in that area and he told me it was true, have also heard os something called the Gian in the Anza Borrego area but can't find any info on it. also found a book years ago that mentioned a lost Spanish Mission some where over the border, i believe.

he has a few pictures from the place but something happened and they had to leave and never went back would love to hear from anyone about these stories thanks

- Jim of El Centro, Ca on 2014-08-14 said:

Will, where is this suppose site? Locally no one really has a clue about the lost ship. In Julian you can hear a story of a Viking ship but nothing about a Spanish one. How come National Geographic never published this find? Love to hear more about this rare find.

- Will Williams of El Centro, CA on 2014-05-15 said:

I was among those that made the original discovery of the ship. I was about 14 years old in 1968-69. It is indeed a Spanish Galleon. The only parts of the vessel exposed were the tip of the front mast and the upper most part of the main mast. My father and his friends marked the spot and suspecting it was a ship contacted National Geographic Society. They came out, set up an excavation site and dug up the vessel. I visited the site many times to check progress and hoped to get information. As long as the NatGeo teams were there I was never allowed in or given info. Years later after NatGeo abandoned the site I learned that there were no valuables on board, only pieces of dinnerware, and other things of intrinsic value.

- JoJo of San Diego, CA on 2013-09-12 said:

To MAX: hello, I am a San Diego resident and "explorer" , at least of areas I can drive to HAHA. I have an interest in the desert area to the east and would love to pick your brain on cool spots to check out. Well not sure if email notifications get sent on this, guess I'll check back later.

- Max of Salton City , ca on 2013-08-19 said:

Having grown up and lived here most of my life, from age 3 to now 56. I've come to know and have seen many things out here in the desert. The early Indians locally, "Cahuilla'etc.. traded with tribes from central America and southern Mexico. The local tribes paid for ceremonial peyote and Mushrooms with Emeralds.The whole area from Blythe to Borrego is littered with Geodes of all types, if you know where to look and what to look for.Wherever there is chocolate brown rock there's Gold, and many other minerals. Crystals 7-10 inches in length lying on the ground.Geodes will appear to look like what I call brain matter and somewhat chalky to pale tan in color.The old mine maps of the area will show Berryllium mines which is the mineral emeralds come from. yes there was one here and Emeralds have been found in the area, as well as gold.People are very tight lipped in general about these things, but by and large few have seen and touched what I have in these past 45 years of exploring out here from Blythe to Yuma to Calexico to Morongo Valley up into 29 Palms and beyond.Be aware the desert will show you many things don't be alarmed or scared, just experience it and move on don't dwell on was it real, or not ? Above all don't lose or doubt your sanity, should you venture out here alone.

- bill haymen of the valley san fernando, ca on 2013-08-15 said:

NOT to dweel on this but I came across the Digger gary this past June 2013, he had a lot to talk about, between his florida to maryland beachcombing, coinshooting etc,, he did a quick ??? month long by the salton sea but has finally given this whole lost ship idea a waste of his time. after all those years too.. he will be now going for the easy finds aka coins and beaching .. well hope he makes it take care all.

- pancho of san diegoon 2013-05-07 said:

Great site: Here's my story,Back in 1967,when I was 17,now I'm 62 and sitt'n in the back seat with my school buddy. His Dad driv'n and his Geologist/treasure hunt'n friend,next to him.Went for Hamburgers and on the way the Geologist was tell'n his Dad 'bout "his" exploit "digg'n for a Spanish Galleon in the Imperial Desert.I love these stories. He took a D-2 type of dozer and installed a drill that bit into and pulled out Mediteranean wood,he had it analized.This was

back in late 50's.I found him in 1979 work'n with a mine in Montana and got him together with a Gemologist and they rented a plane with a manetometer and told me they "found the spot".They had a fall'n-out and me sad "of course".
In 2005 I found him liv'n in a mountain city ,east of S.D. He bei'n 82"at least" tells me,I'll show you where it's at, "but don't forget me if you find it" Bei'n summer I waited to return to "him" during winter and go to the site. But I waited 2 years "my mistake" and "he" went-on to another state to live in a retirement home. He called me once ,but I lost his number.I'm still kick'n myself. Lot more details of the "digg'n" and MGM telli'n him they were to make a Documentory,when "finding it". He was from Imperial Valley and has told me of "other" treasures ,but "times tight now" Alas.....

- David Fruhling of Gold Hill, Oregon on 2013-01-21 said:

David Whitecrow, the moon doesn't cast any shadow. It actually reflects light from the sun shining on it. That's how you can see the moon. There's only one way the moon can cast a shadow and that's during a solar eclipse. Unfortunately, the shadow is hundreds of miles across and couldn't pinpoint anything. For doubters of any "ships in the desert" just remember: Rumors are usually based on facts.

- Michelle of Hemet, CA on 2012-01-05 said:

I don't see these stories of Ships in the Desert being that far fetched given the fact that Anza-Borrego Park has some of the most well preserved fossils in the canyons of ancient sea-life! I believe it is possible, whether Viking or Spanish-either way its an intriguing Thought. Also, I remember watching a program about a n 18th Century ship being accidentally unearthed (U.S. I believe) And all of its contents were so well preserved they have them on display.

- Keith Williams of Ontario, Ca on 2011-10-30 said:

I was searching ships found in the desert from a childhood memory I had from about 1965. My family is generations back in the Calexico area and we used to ride dune buggies out at Mt Signal and the superstition hills. I remember when I was about six years old we came across the remains of a very large wooden ship carcass in the hills. The area had wooden stakes with 'cans' attached with a papers in them in the 4 corners of the site. I remember my dad taking out the paper and reading it and commenting on that it was a excavation site of a Spanish ship. I'm now curious what it really was?

- bill haymen of the valley, ca on 2011-05-30 said:

strange as it May seem i bumped into an old beachcomber back in 1972 that off and on for the last 30 plus years will head out to the desert in search of this lost ship/ last i seen of him was this early May as he was leaving for the east coast again and getting ready for the Hurricane season also down florida way he gose by the nickname "" digger gary "" me i am up and down the California Coast from mid May to usually Mid October every year.. beachcombing .. anyway just wanted to let all know that there must be something to this lost ship as no man would search for it all these years unless he knows something thats NOT been printed etc..

- Edgar of Redondo Beach, California on 2011-05-25 said:

I must confess I think is a beatiful story but there is no real evidence of spanish ships lost in that area not to mention one of the names you talk about in your article isn't even spanish. An BTW, I don't need to visit the spanish national navy museum to realize those captains never existed. BTW, Felipe II died in 1598... I have my doubts about him ordering to search for pearls in 1611 ;-) Again, is a beautiful story. Perfect for the sequel of "The goonies"

- J.D. on 2011-03-08 said:

I know someone who has "authenticated" Spanish cannon shot in his possession that was found in the desert at The Salton Sea over 40 years ago. I held it in my own hand!

- Dave Sanchez of Rocklin, Ca. on 2009-01-29 said:

This is not just some torist attraction. When the stories started being reported, there was nothing out there for anyone to make any money off the stories. In 1970 my father was comming home from Palm springs to Riverside and he was looking to the south just outside of Palm Springs and he had never heard of any "ship" stories. However he came home with the news that he saw part of a ship and mast sticking out of the desert sand. I believe him.

- chief white segull on 2009-01-26 said:

it's called mt signal,where the treasure at.....buried way beneath the mountains.....at least a mile .....

- Therese of Anaheim, CA on 2008-10-12 said:

My Husband and I were camping at RCA Side of the Salt n Sea 10/10/2008. I want to know is it haunted. because eerie things had happen. my Photos had shooting orbs. I have photos if any one out there can tell me if it is really truly orbs. Thank You Therese

- Nelson H. of South Gate, CA on 2008-06-18 said:

David, If you can please contact me in regards to the shadow cave, your E-Mail returned unknown. aliengraphics@sbcglobal.net

- Tom Sherer of Indio, CA on 2008-04-15 said:

There are three other legends about Spanish (presumably) ships in the Salton Sink: 1) there are maps in an archive in Spain which show that in the early 1600s there were navigable waters in the Colorado up to about Blythie or Parker, in the Salton Sea to the Mecca/Indio area from the Gulf of CA (about 10 years ago, I was directed to Spanish website where I saw those maps); 2) that an early Anglo resident on the East side of the Salton Sink was rumored to have found a shipwreck in a canyon containing not pearls, but gold and annually made long trips back to the East Coast (hopefully, in the Summer); 3) local Indian elders have a story of a great white "bird" flapping its wings in the middle of the Sink - presumably the tattered sails of a ship. As for the Viking ship, if Greenland was green in 960 and Vineland had vines in 1000, there very well could have been an ice-free route through the Canadian Arctic during the Summers until the Big Chill. Further, there are stories out of Nevada about red-haired white men who fought with the Paiutes. Some bodies were supposedly found in caves both in the south around Jean and in the north around Reno.

- David Whitecrow of San Diego, CA on 2007-02-21 said:

...I found your article (several stories of Spanish galleon ship(s) laiden with treasure and storm driven in unusual flooding season, in the Gulf of California; some sailing in the direction of and into the Salton Sea. I learned of one version not included in your article - some survivors of one of these ships tha sunk in a terible storm was near Calixeco CA. when it ran aground with its treasure in tacked. The story was featured in the San Diego Union news paper back in the early '70, when I came across it one Sunday morning on / about June. AS the story read: Some of the ships treasure was buried at a site during a full moon phase, at night, as it's (the moon's) shadow marked the spot at a location that appeared to be a large cave opening, at the foot of a small mountain ridge. This would be the best place to bury the many treasure chest taken from the abandon Spanish ships. By returning to the same spot the following year, at same month and time, the site would be easy to relocate-by the Moon casting it's shadow as a large cave entrance - this marked the spot where the treasures were buried. I must point out a friend and I returned from a trip to the subject location a few days before I read this story in the newspaper, I had never ever heard about the lost treasure nor did I suspect what my friend and I witnessed a few day before would / could be the very exact same 'Cave Shadow' I call it now, seen at the campsite we had spent a few days hunting and camping. My point is I know where this site is, the month and day the full moon will cast it's shadow marking the treasure cave. If anyone out there knows anything relating to this subject, contact me via my

email address (davidwhitecrow @ sbcglobal.net). My friend Vern, has since passed on, and we never did make it back to the subject location like we had hoped to.....dwc

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She had an Illinois lottery ticket worth $50,000, until courts said it was bought with drug money

stltoday.com

- The Associated Press

DECATUR, Ill. • An Illinois woman will lose out on the proceeds from a $50,000 lottery ticket after a state appeals court ruled the government should keep the money because the ticket was purchased with drug money.

The Fourth District Appeals Court ruling overturns a Macon County judge who previously awarded the winnings to Tykisha Lofton, **the Herald and Review** reported.

Police found the lottery ticket while raiding a Decatur home where Lofton lived with her boyfriend, Terrance Norwood. Norwood told authorities that he had already turned the ticket in to claim the prize, worth more than $35,000 when paid as a lump sum.

Norwood told police the ticket was his way out of having to sell drugs. He was sentenced in October 2015 for drug dealing, drug possession and armed violence offenses.

Lofton was present during the raid but had told police she wasn't aware Norwood sold drugs.

Police say Lofton didn't dispute that Norwood had purchased the ticket, although she scratched it off. Court documents say Lofton later told authorities she had bought the ticket with money she received from babysitting.

Lofton said her purchase yielded a free ticket and that it was the prize winner. She produced a lottery winner claim form that included her name and details.

The Macon County judge had said he didn't believe her story and ruled that the ticket was most likely bought with drug money. However, he ruled in Lofton's favor, saying that extending Illinois forfeiture laws to grab the proceeds was going too far.

The appeals court judges overturned that ruling.

"Because of the direct link between the lottery winnings and the funds used to purchase the original ticket, the winnings can reasonably be considered 'proceeds traceable' to Norwood's illegal drug sales," they wrote.

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10:48, 30 Oct 2016 Updated 10:48, 30 Oct 2016 By Record Reporter dailyrecord.co.uk

Anti-terror cops race to anthrax alert after opera lover's ashes are thrown into orchestra pit



An opera lover sparked an anthrax scare after scattering ashes at the Metropolitan Opera

A MAN sparked an anthrax scare after scattering an opera-lover's ashes into the orchestra pit at New York's Metropolitan Opera House.

The freakish incident during an afternoon performance of Rossini's Guillaume Tell forced Met officials to cancel the rest of the show as well as an evening performance of a second opera.

John Miller, the New York Police Department's deputy commissioner in charge of intelligence and counter-terrorism , said several audience members revealed a man told them he was there to sprinkle the ashes of a friend, his mentor in the opera.



Andreas Praefcke

The Metropolitan Opera House in New York where the anthrax scare took place

Miller said the man was in front of the first row of seats when he sprinkled the powder into the orchestra pit during the second intermission when most of the musicians were not present.

He said the powder will be tested, but the possibility that it was in fact human ashes "is certainly an area that we are pursuing".

Police know who the man is and are reaching out to him, Miller said, adding that the man does not live in New York.

He said the disposal of ashes at an opera house may violate city codes but added: "I don't believe at this point that we see any criminal intent here."

Met General Manager Peter Gelb said, "We appreciate opera lovers coming to the Met. We hope that they will not bring their ashes with them."

Police initially said one person at the opera house requested medical attention. Miller said no-one was injured.

The Met cancelled Saturday night's performance of L'Italiana In Algeri, another Rossini opera, because of the investigation.

Audience members at Guillaume Tell described confusion as the intermission went on longer than usual.

A Met representative at first announced that a technical issue was causing the delay, then returned a few minutes later to announce that the fourth act would not be performed. The audience was told to go home.

One opera lover, who didn't want to be named, said: "I can't believe anyone would scatter ashes at the opera. They would just be vacuumed up before the next performance."

An evening performance at the Metropolitan Opera House also had to be cancelled



Andreas Praefcke

Dylan Hayden of Toronto said: "Everybody kind of slowly walked out. As we were exiting the building, I noticed the counter-terrorism unit going into the building."

Mr Hayden, who was seated in the 11th row back, added: "The idea that they said that it was a technical error, when I was maybe 15 feet away from a potential dangerous substance, that kind of irks me a little bit. But at no point did I feel an actual threat."

Micaela Baranello, a musicologist at Smith College in Massachusetts, said some audience members booed when the cancellation was announced and one man chanted: "I want my money back, I want my money back."

Mr Gelb said people who had Saturday tickets to either opera should call the Met and make arrangements to see a later performance.

But Ms Baranello, who spoke by phone from a train heading back to Massachusetts, said that is not so easy for opera fans who do not live in New York.

"It's too bad because most of the best music in Guillaume Tell is in Act 4, in my opinion," she said.

Guillaume Tell, Rossini's opera about folk hero William Tell, had not been performed at the Met in more than 80 years before this season.

The opera's overture is known to many Americans as the theme music to the 1950s TV show The Lone Ranger.

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'Lucky chicken' finds fame in Japan - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

- 1 November 2016



Image copyrightCity of Osaka

The zoo has many rare creatures, but Masahiro the chicken is the centre of attention

A rooster has become an unlikely draw for visitors at a Japanese zoo after dodging death three times, earning him a reputation as a lucky bird.

The male chicken, named Masahiro, has become something of a local celebrity in Osaka, even serving as an honorary "chief" of the local traffic police last month, the Kyodo news agency reports.

Masahiro was meant to become raccoon food at the city's Tennoji Zoo, but was temporarily spared in order to help raise a parentless duckling. After a couple of months, his fate appeared sealed again - this time as live bait to attract a wild weasel that had been attacking birds at the zoo. When the weasel didn't turn up, the rooster was earmarked as dinner for the lions and tigers but, Kyodo says, "his turn never came".

Having avoided a grisly end three times, zoo staff decided there was something special about this chicken and removed him from the food chain. Since then, Masahiro has been attracting visitors who want to hold him in the hope that some luck rubs off on them. The city government is also offering people the chance to register for a photo session with Masahiro this week, noting that 2017 is the Year of the Rooster in the Chinese zodiac.

Zoo vet Shin Nishioka says he never imagined that a chicken would "grab the spotlight". He tells Kyodo: "Encountering Masahiro, who survived by chance, is a good opportunity to think of what life means."

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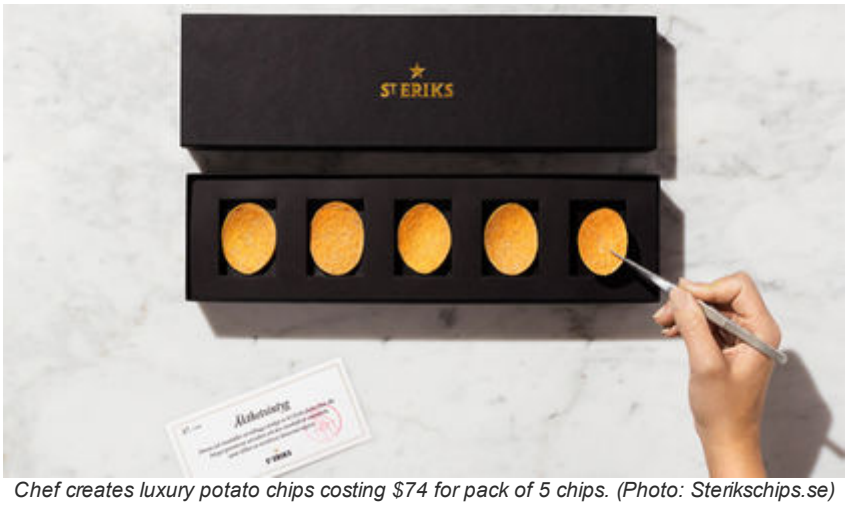
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Luxury potato chips costing $74 for pack of 5 chips sells out

ottawasun.com

Postmedia Network

First posted: Thursday, October 20, 2016 02:01 PM EDT | Updated: Thursday, October 20, 2016 02:12 PM EDT



Chef creates luxury potato chips costing $74 for pack of 5 chips. (Photo: Sterikschips.se)

A Swedish brewery created some of the most expensive potato chips in the world as part of a promotional stunt for its beer - and people have literally gobbled it up!

The pack of five chips was being sold for a whopping $74 - that's $14.80 for a single chip, with proceeds going to charity - and they sold out in less than a few days.

St.Erik's Brewery created the snack, saying they wanted something that rivaled its high-class beer, so they enlisted a top chef to design a potato chip that features rare Nordic ingredients such as matsutake, one of the world's most sought-after species of mushrooms, and a special truffle seaweed from the Faroe Islands that can be found only in cold tidal waters, according the site where it's being sold.

"St.Erik's Brewery is one of Sweden's leading microbreweries and we're passionate about the craftsmanship that goes into our beer. At the same time, we felt that we were missing a snack of the same status to serve with it," brand manager Marcus Friari said in a statement.

Dreamed up by chef Pi Le, the chips were all handmade.

"It took a delicate touch, a finely honed sense of taste and time to ensure that each chip would achieve a perfect balance between the various ingredients," said Le. "The taste is a very Scandinavian one. … Most people recognize potatoes and onions, but what stands out is the quality."

Canoe Sun Media is a member of

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The macabre fate of 'beating heart corpses'

By Zaria Gorvett 4 November 2016

bbc.com

BBC The macabre fate of 'beating heart corpses'



(Credit: Getty Images)

Their bodies are as fresh as the day they departed. How do we know they're really dead?

Their hearts are still beating. They urinate. Their bodies don't decompose and they are warm to the touch; their stomachs rumble, their wounds heal and their guts can digest food. They can have heart attacks, catch a fever and suffer from bedsores. They can blush and sweat – they can even have babies.

And yet, according to most legal definitions and the vast majority of doctors these patients are thoroughly, indisputably deceased.

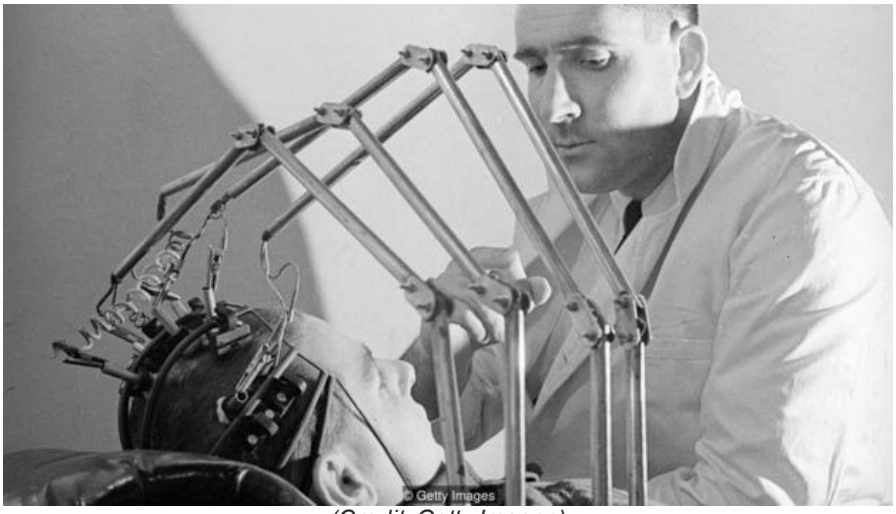
These are the beating heart cadavers; brain-dead corpses with functioning organs and a pulse. Their medical costs are astronomical (up to $217,784 for just a few weeks), but with a bit of luck and a lot of help, today it's possible for the body to survive for months – or in rare cases, decades – even though it's technically dead. How is this possible? Why does this happen? And how do doctors know they're really dead?

Premature burials

Identifying the dead has never been easy. In 19th Century France there were 30 theories about how to tell if someone had passed away – including attaching pincers to their nipples and putting leeches in their bottom. Elsewhere, the most reliable methods included yelling a patient's name (if the patient ignored them three times, they were dead) or thrusting mirrors under their noses to see if they fogged up.

Early attempts to test for signs of life included attaching pincers to nipples (Credit: Getty Images)

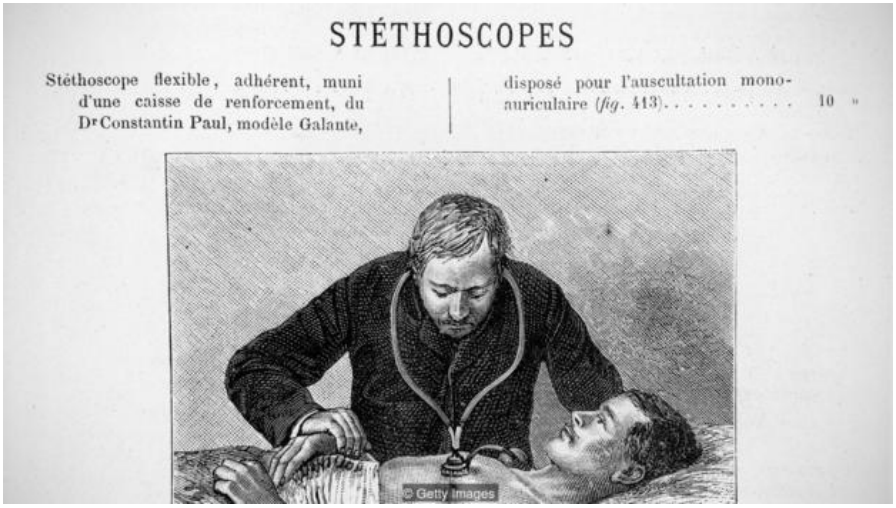
Suffice to say, the medical establishment wasn't convinced about any of them. Then in 1846, the Academy of Sciences in Paris launched a competition for "'the best work on the signs of death and the means of preventing premature burials" and a young doctor tried his luck. Eugène Bouchut figured that if a person's heart had stopped beating, they were surely dead. He suggested using the newly invented stethoscope to listen for a heartbeat – if the doctor didn't hear anything for two minutes, they could be safely buried.



(Credit: Getty Images)

He won the competition and his definition of "clinical death" stuck, eventually to be immortalised in films, books and popular wisdom. "There wasn't much that could be done, so basically anyone could look at a person, check for a pulse and decide whether they were dead or alive," says Robert Veatch from the Kennedy Institute of Ethics.

But a chance discovery in the 1920s made things decidedly messier. An electrical engineer from Brooklyn, New York, had been investigating why people die after they've been electrocuted – and wondered if the right voltage might also jolt them back to life. William Kouwenhoven devoted the next 50 years to finding a way to make it happen, work which eventually led to the invention of the defibrillator.



(Credit: Getty Images)

The loss of heart beat was once considered a sign of death, but we now know this need not be the end (Credit: Getty Images)

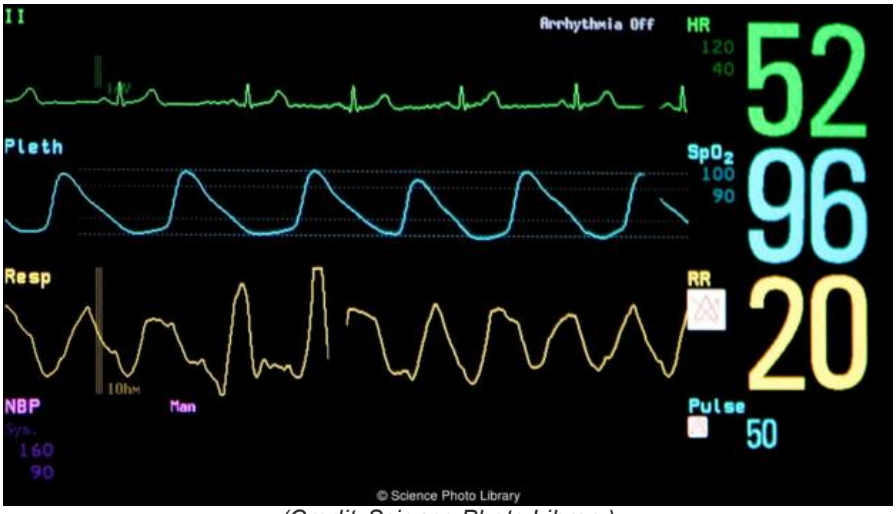
It was the first of a deluge of revolutionary new techniques, including mechanical ventilators and feeding tubes, catheters and dialysis machines. For the first time, you could lack certain bodily functions and still be alive. Our understanding of death was becoming unstuck.

The invention of the EEG – which can be used to identify brain activity – dealt the final blow. Starting in the 1950s, doctors across the globe began discovering that some of their patients, who they had previously considered only comatose, in fact had no brain activity at all. In France the mysterious phenomenon was termed coma dépasse, meaning literally "a state beyond coma". They had discovered the 'beating-heart cadavers', people whose bodies were alive though their brains were dead.

This was an entirely new category of patient, one which overturned 5,000 years of medical understanding in a single sweep, raising new questions about how death is identified and dredging up some thorny philosophical, ethical and legal issues to boot.

"It goes back and forth as to what people call them but I think patient is the correct term," says Eelco Wijdicks, a neurologist from Rochester, Minnesota.

Beating heart cadavers should not be confused with coma patients or those in a vegetative state (Credit: Science Photo Library)



(Credit: Science Photo Library)

These beating heart cadavers should not be confused with other kinds of unconscious patients, such as those in a coma. Though they aren't able to sit up and respond to the sound of their name, they still show brain activity, undergoing cycles of sleep and (unresponsive) wakefulness. A patient in a coma has the potential to make a full recovery.

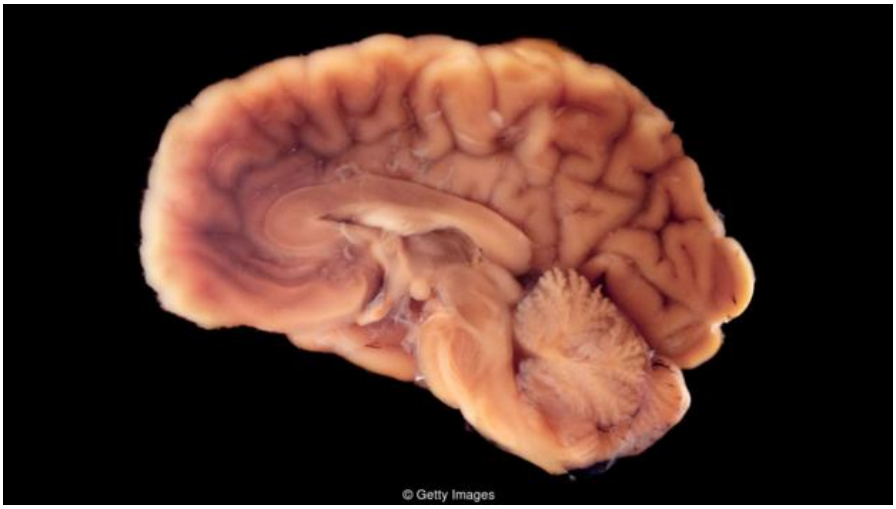
A persistent vegetative state is decidedly more serious – in these patients the higher brain is permanently, irretrievably damaged – but though they will never have another conscious thought, again, they are not dead.

To qualify as a beating heart cadaver, the entire brain must be dead. This includes the "brain stem", the primitive, tube-shaped mass at the bottom of the brain which controls critical bodily functions, such as breathing. But, somewhat disconcertingly, our other organs aren't as troubled by the death of their HQ as you'd think.

Alan Shewmon, a neurologist from UCLA and outspoken critic of the brain death definition, identified 175 cases where people's bodies survived for more than a week after the person had died. In some cases, their hearts kept beating and their organs kept functioning for a further 14 years – for one cadaver, this strange afterlife lasted two decades.

How is this possible?

In fact, biologically speaking, there has never been a single moment of death; each passing is really a series of mini-deaths, with different tissues dropping off at different rates. "Choosing a definition of death is essentially a religious or philosophical question," says Veatch.



(Credit: Getty Images)

The brain uses up 25% of our body's oxygen, meaning it is the first organ to die after we stop breathing (Credit: Getty Images)

For centuries, soldiers, butchers and executioners have observed how certain body parts may continue twitching after decapitation or dismemberment. Even long before life support, 19th Century physicians related accounts of patients whose hearts had continued to beat for several hours after they stopped breathing.

At times, this slow decline can have alarming consequences. One example is the Lazarus sign, an automatic reflex first reported in 1984. The reflex causes the dead to sit up, briefly raise their arms and drop them, crossed, onto their chests. It happens because while most reflexes are mediated by the brain, some are overseen by "reflex arcs", which travel through the spine instead. In addition to the Lazarus reflex, corpses also have the knee-jerk reflex intact.

Further along the life-death continuum, skin and brain stem cells are known to remain alive for several days after a person has died. Living muscle stem cells have been found in corpses which are two-and-a-half-weeks old.

Even our genes keep going long after we've taken our last breath. Earlier this year, scientists discovered thousands which spring to life days after death, including those involved in inflammation, counteracting stress and – mysteriously – embryonic development.

Beating heart cadavers can only exist because of this lopsided decline – it's all dependent on the brain dying first. To get to grips with why this happens, consider this. Though the brain makes up just 2% of a person's body weight, it sucks up a staggering 25% of all its oxygen.

Neurons are so high-maintenance in part because they are active all the time. They are constantly pumping out ions to create miniature electrical gradients between their insides and the surrounding environment; to fire, they simply open up the floodgates and let the ions flow back in.

The trouble is, they can't stop pumping. If their efforts are stalled by a lack of oxygen, neurons are rapidly inundated with ions which build to toxic levels, causing irreversible damage. This "ischaemic cascade" explains why if you accidentally lop off a finger, it can usually be sewn back on, but most people can't hold their breath for more than a few minutes without fainting.



(Credit: Science Photo Library)

Doctors now follow standard procedures to test for lingering signs of life (Credit: Science Photo Library)

Which brings us back to that perennial medical problem: if your heart's still beating, how can doctors tell you're dead? To begin with, doctors identified victims of coma dépasse by checking for the absence of brain activity on an EEG. But there was a problem.

Colleen Burns woke up just as doctors were about to remove her organs

Alarmingly, alcohol, anaesthesia, some illnesses (such as hypothermia) and many drugs (including Valium) can shut down brain activity, conning doctors into thinking their patient is dead. In 2009, Colleen Burns was found in a drug-induced coma and doctors at a hospital in New York thought she was dead. She woke up in the operating room the day before doctors were due to remove her organs (NB: it's unlikely this would have gone ahead, because her doctors had planned additional tests before the surgery).

Several decades earlier in 1968, a group of esteemed Harvard doctors called an emergency meeting to discuss exactly this. Over the course of several months, they devised a set of foolproof criteria which would allow doctors to avoid such blunders and establish that beating heart cadavers were definitely dead.

The tests remain the global standard today, though some of them look uncannily like those from the 19th Century. For a start, a patient should be "unresponsive to verbal stimuli", such as yelling their name. And though leeches and nipple pincers are out, they should remain unresponsive despite numerous uncomfortable procedures, including injecting ice-cold water into one of their ears – a technique which aims to trigger an automatic reflex and make the eyes move. This particular test is so valuable it won its discoverer a Nobel Prize.

Finally, the patient shouldn't be able to breathe on their own, since this is a sure sign that their primitive brain is still going. In the case of Burns, the horrifying incident was only possible because her doctors ignored tell-tale signs that she was alive; she curled her toes when they were touched, moved her mouth and tongue and was breathing independently, though she was hooked up to a respirator. Had they followed the Harvard criteria correctly, they would never have declared her dead.

Cadaver donor management

You might expect all medical treatment to stop after someone is considered dead – even if they are a beating heart cadaver – but that's not quite true. Today beating heart cadavers have spawned a strange new medical specialty, "cadaver donor management", which aims to improve the success of transplants by tending to the health of the dead. The aim of the game is to fool the body into thinking everything is fine until recipients are lined up and their surgeons are ready.

In all, nearly twice as many viable organs – around 3.9 per cadaver– are retrieved from these donors compared to those without a pulse and they're currently the only reliable source of hearts for transplant.



(Credit: Science Photo Library)

Beating heart cadavers may be given sophisticated treatments to preserve the organs for donation (Credit: Science Photo Library)

Intriguingly, the part of the brain that the body misses most is not its primitive stem or, as we'd like to think, the wrinkled seat of human consciousness (the cortex), but the hypothalamus. The almond-shaped structure monitors levels of important hormones, including those which regulate a person's blood pressure, appetite, circadian rhythms, sugar levels, fluid balance and energy expenditure – then makes them, or instructs the pituitary gland to do so.

Instead the hormones must be provided by intensive care teams, who add just enough to an intravenous drip as and when they are needed. "It's not just a case of putting them on a ventilator

and giving them some food – it's far more than that," says Wijdicks.

> Once the consent forms have been signed, dead patients receive the best medical care of their lives

Of course, not everyone is comfortable with the idea. To some, organ donor management reduces human beings to mere collections of organs to be stripped for parts. As journalist Dick Teresi cynically put it, once the consent forms have been signed, dead patients receive the best medical care of their lives.

These interventions are only possible because the Harvard tests promise to sort the dead and the living into neat boxes – but alas, yet again death is messier than we'd like to think. In a review of 611 patients diagnosed as brain dead using their criteria, scientists found brain activity in 23%. In another study, 4% had sleep-like patterns of activity for up to a week after they had died. Others have reported beating heart cadavers flinching under the surgeon's knife and there have even been suggestions that they should be given an anaesthetic – though this is controversial.



(Credit: Getty Images)

The exact definition of death depends on our culture and religion (Credit: Getty Images)

To inject further controversy into the mix, some people don't even agree with the definition in principle, let alone in practice. In the United States, many Orthodox Jews, some Roman Catholics and certain ethnic minorities – in total, around 20% of the population – like their dead with a flat-lining heart rate and cold to the touch. "There's this group of people who quite militantly are offended when a doctor tries to pronounce death on someone that the family thinks are still alive," says Veatch.

"Even with clinical death, there are disputes – for instance about how long it's necessary for circulation to be lost before it's impossible for it to be restored. We use five minutes in the US but there isn't really good evidence that that's the right number," says Veatch.

At the heart of many legal struggles is the right to choose your own definition of death and when life support should be removed, issues Veatch is particularly passionate about. "I have consistently supported individuals who would insist on a circulatory definition, though that's not the one I would use," he says.

Where it gets particularly sticky is if the victim is pregnant. In these cases, the patient's family have a heart-breaking choice to make. They can either accept that they've lost her unborn baby, or begin the intensive and often gruesome battle to keep her going long enough to deliver, which is usually when the foetus is about 24-weeks-old.

Back in 2013, Marlise Munoz was found unconscious at her home in Texas. Her doctors suspected that she had suffered a pulmonary embolism and discovered that she was 14 weeks pregnant. Two

days later she was declared dead. Munoz was a paramedic and had previously told her husband that in case of brain death, she would not want to be kept alive artificially. He petitioned to have her life support removed – but the hospital refused.



(Credit: Science Photo Library)

A beating heart cadaver may still be able to sustain a growing foetus (Credit: Science Photo Library)

"In Texas there's an automatic invalidation of a pregnant woman's advanced directive. If she wanted them to withdraw life-sustaining treatment, then when she died that would not be allowed – that would be ripped up. She would be provided life-sustaining treatment," says Christopher Burkle, an anaesthetist from Rochester, Minnesota who co-authored a paper on the subject with Wijdicks.

The circumstances are extremely rare, with only about 30 reported cases between 1982 and 2010, but the tug-of-war between the interests of the mother and those of her unborn baby begs the question: which human rights should we retain when we're dead?

"In the US a dead patient still has rights to the protection of their medical information, for example. You can't publish their medical record on the 6 o'clock news – a person who is dead has privacy rights in that respect. It's not a huge jump to suggest that rights be maintained in other avenues for a dead person," says Burkle.

And things may be about to get a lot more complicated. At the moment, doctors are bound by the "dead donor rule", which asserts that no organs can be removed until a person is dead – that is, totally brain-dead or with a heart which has already stopped beating. But some people, including Veatch, think this should change.

They have proposed the "higher brain" definition, which means a person isn't dead when their heart stops beating, or even when they stop breathing – a person is dead when they lose their "personhood". Those with crucial parts of their brains intact and the ability to breathe independently would be dead so long as they could no longer have conscious thoughts.

By loosening up the definition a little further, transplant doctors would have access to a much larger pool of potential donors than they do at the moment and save countless lives.

Death isn't an event, it's a process – but after thousands of years of trying, we're still searching for something more definitive. It doesn't look like this is about to end any time soon.

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WATCH: Madman pedals big wheel on I-76, witnesses remain calm

By Michael Tanenbaum PhillyVoice Staff

phillyvoice.com

PhillyVoice



Meanwhile in Philly/Facebook Screengrab from undated video of man who allegedly rode a big wheel on Interstate 76 in the Philadelphia area.

October 03, 2016

WATCH: Madman pedals big wheel on I-76, witnesses remain calm

Hall of Fame toy takes spin on Philadelphia highway

Way back in 1969, Pennsylvania toy manufacturer Louis Marx and Company invented the low-riding big wheel tricycle as a safer alternative to bikes and trikes for kids between the ages of eight and ten years old. The torch was later carried by Empire Plastics and the neighborhood mode of transportation remained popular until Bart Simpson rode into the American family on a skateboard.

The big wheel was officially inducted into the Rochester-based National Toy Hall of Fame in 2009.

> *"Kids on Big Wheels sought out bumps, corners, and pavements where they could pick up speed. Even older children thrilled at the g-forces. The Big Wheel also gave them mobility along with a measure of independence."*

Apparently, some grown man in the Philadelphia area saw fit to take his big wheel out for a ride on Interstate 76, much to the confusion of drivers stuck in slow-moving traffic.

The caveat on the video below, published Monday by local Facebook humor account Meanwhile in Philly, is that we have no factual information about when this happened or where on the highway it occurred. (**Note: Video contains explicit language**).

A couple things stand out about this. First, it's a great relief that the guy riding the big wheel is not eight to ten years old, or else this would be much bigger news. Second, the fellow who filmed this incident really deserves a special round of applause for his relaxed, humor-first demeanor behind the wheel, even as a minivan swerves out of the way of the rider.

Some commenters on Facebook have pointed out that the guy on the big wheel was traveling at about the same rate of speed traffic usually permits on I-76.

Most believe that this man deserves serious consideration for a Darwin Award, even though he did not successfully chlorinate the gene pool.

Michael Tanenbaum

tanenbaum@phillyvoice.com

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Man angry cops didn't have arrest warrant for him is jailed

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 3, 2016

EBENSBURG, Pa. (AP) — Police say a Pennsylvania man who became angry when told there were no outstanding warrants for his arrest has been jailed.

Cambria Township police say 40-year-old Mervin Sollenberger arrived at the Cambria County jail late Tuesday to surrender on outstanding arrest warrants. But police told him there were no warrants for his arrest.

WJAC-TV (http://bit.ly/2f4nuAJ) reports that's when the Duncansville man became enraged, threatening to assault the jail's guards and kicking a steel cage door at the lockup.

Sollenberger has been charged with making terroristic threats and disorderly conduct. He remained jailed Thursday after failing to post 10 percent of his $20,000 bail.

Online court records don't list an attorney for Sollenberger. He faces a preliminary hearing Nov. 8.

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Information from: WJAC-TV, http://www.wjactv.com

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Man arrested at JIA after whipping out genitals on flight, slapping crew members

firstcoastnews.com

WTLV

Man arrested at JIA after whipping out genitals on flight and open-hand slapping crew members

Jacob Rodriguez, WTLV5:05 PM. EST November 04, 2016

A passenger on an international flight was arrested after the plane made an emergency landing at Jacksonville International Airport Wednesday for assaulting several flight attendants, a federal charging affidavit says.

Oliver Charlie Halliday Gee, 34, of Playa del Carmen, Mexico, was reportedly unruly prior to the arrest and prevented several flight attendants from doing their job because he was hurling insults and obscenities and other passengers.

Nearly 90 minutes into the flight, Gee escalated and threatened to kill another passenger, hurt a 3-year-old and then removing his clothes to expose his penis. The charging affidavit from the FBI says it seemed like he was about to wee in the plane's cabin.

At this point, a passenger who said he was skilled in martial arts stepped in to help get Gee to the bathroom but was promptly slapped several times across the face with an open hand. A flight attendant was slapped twice as well - once in the face and once in the thigh, both times with an open hand, the charging affidavit says.

Eventually, the flight attendant and the passenger trained in martial arts were able to subdue Gee and get him in his seat just before the flight touched down at JIA.

The charging affidavit mentions that the crew was worried about keeping Gee on the Condor 2115 flight, because the flight was from Cancun, Mexico to Frankfurt, Germany and most of it would take place over water. They weren't sure they would be able to stop and get the man off the plane while over the Atlantic Ocean.

Gee was taken into custody by Jacksonville Aviation Authority Police and is charged with assault or intimidation of a flight crew. He faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in federal prison.

He made his appearance in federal court on Thursday and will be detained until his formal detention hearing Nov. 7.

(© 2016 WTLV)

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Man arrested over brass theft from historic Philly building

yahoo.com

AP October 27, 2016

Assc
Pres



Pedestrians look at the north side of the grand staircase entrance to The Union League in Philadelphia, which was damaged in the early morning hours of Monday, Oct. 24, 2016 as someone apparently tried to rip the brass railing off its supports to resell for money. (Clem Murray/The Philadelphia Inquirer via AP)

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Police say a man is in custody for damaging an exterior staircase at a historically significant building in downtown Philadelphia.

Tuesday's theft of a 6-foot section of brass railing from the Union League of Philadelphia sent brick and stone from the grand, curved staircase tumbling to the sidewalk.

Police on Thursday say they've arrested 50-year-old Reginald Phillips and charged him with criminal mischief, theft and related offenses.

They say Phillips took the brass to a local scrap yard, but a piece of the railing has been recovered. Damage is estimated at $100,000.

No attorney information for Phillips is available in online court documents.

The group's 151-year-old French Renaissance-style building sits a couple blocks from City Hall. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

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The Strange Story Of The Man Behind 'Strange Fruit'

2012-09-05 npr.org

NPR logo

September 5, 20123:24 AM ET



Abel Meeropol watches as his sons, Robert and Michael, play with a train set.

One of Billie Holiday's most iconic songs is "Strange Fruit," a haunting protest against the inhumanity of racism. Many people know that the man who wrote the song was inspired by a photograph of a lynching. But they might not realize that he's also tied to another watershed moment in America's history.

The man behind "Strange Fruit" is New York City's Abel Meeropol, and he really has two stories. They both begin at Dewitt Clinton High School, a public high school in the Bronx that has an astonishing number of famous people in its alumni. James Baldwin went there. So did Countee Cullen, Richard Rodgers, Burt Lancaster, Stan Lee, Neil Simon, Richard Avedon and Ralph Lauren.

Meeropol graduated from Dewitt Clinton in 1921; he went on to teach English there for 17 years. He was also a poet and a social activist, says Gerard Pelisson, who wrote a book about the school.

Article continues after sponsorship



Evolution Of A Song: 'Strange Fruit'

Evolution Of A Song: 'Strange Fruit'

In the late 1930s, Pellison says, Meeropol "was very disturbed at the continuation of racism in America, and seeing a photograph of a lynching sort of put him over the edge."

Meeropol once said the photograph "haunted" him "for days." So he wrote a poem about it, which was then printed in a teachers union publication. An amateur composer, Meeropol also set his words to music. He played it for a New York club owner — who ultimately gave it to Billie Holiday.

When Holiday decided to sing "Strange Fruit," the song reached millions of people. While the lyrics never mention lynching, the metaphor is painfully clear:

Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

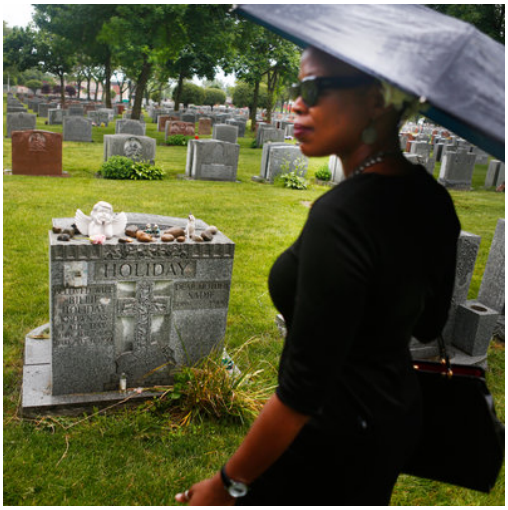
Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

In 1999, *Time* magazine named "Strange Fruit" the "song of the century." The Library of Congress put it in the National Recording Registry. It's been recorded dozens of times. Herbie Hancock and Marcus Miller did an instrumental version, with Miller evoking the poem on his mournful bass clarinet.

Miller says he was surprised to learn the song was written by a white Jewish guy from the Bronx. "Strange Fruit," he says, took extraordinary courage both for Meeropol to write and for Holiday to sing.

"The '60s hadn't happened yet," he says. "Things like that weren't talked about. They certainly weren't sung about."



Looking For Lady Day's Resting Place? Detour Ahead

New York lawmakers didn't like "Strange Fruit." In 1940, Meeropol was called to testify before a committee investigating communism in public schools. They wanted to know whether the American Communist Party had paid him to write the song. They had not — but, like many New York teachers in his day, Meeropol was a Communist.

Journalist David Margolick, who wrote Strange Fruit: The Biography of a Song, says, "There are a million reasons to disparage communism now. But American Communism, one point it had in its favor was that it was concerned about civil rights very early."

Meeropol left his teaching job at Dewitt Clinton in 1945. He eventually quit the Communist Party.

And that's where the second part of Meeropol's story begins. The link is the pseudonym he used when writing poetry and music: Lewis Allan.

"Abel Meeropol's pen name 'Lewis Allan' were the names of their children who were stillborn, who never lived," says his son, Robert Meeropol. He and his older brother, Michael, were raised by Abel and his wife, Anne Meeropol, after the boys' parents — Ethel and Julius Rosenberg — were executed for espionage in 1953.

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death for conspiring to give atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. The Rosenbergs had also been Communists.



Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are taken to prison after being found guilty of nuclear espionage. They were subsequently executed.

The couple's trial and execution made national headlines, and there was also something of a salacious element, given that the Rosenbergs were a married couple. News accounts described it as "the first husband and wife to die in the electric chair."

At the time, the Rosenberg sons, Robert and Michael, were 6 and 10, respectively. News photographs of the boys show them dressed in suits visiting their parents in prison.

"They're these little boys and they're wearing these caps, and they look so young and so vulnerable. It's really a very poignant image," says Margolick.

Robert Meeropol says that in the months following his parents' execution, it was unclear who would take care of him and his brother. It was the height of McCarthyism. Even family members were fearful of being in any way

associated with the Rosenbergs or Communism.

Then, at a Christmas party at the home of W.E.B. Du Bois, the boys were introduced to Abel and Anne Meeropol. A few weeks later, they were living with them.

"One of the most remarkable things was how quickly we adapted," Robert says. "First of all, Abel, what I remember about him as a 6-year-old was that he was a real jokester. He liked to tell silly jokes and play word games, and he would put on these comedy shows that would leave me rolling."

There is something else about Abel Meeropol that seems to connect the man who wrote "Strange Fruit" to the man who created a loving family out of a national scandal. "He was incredibly softhearted," Robert says.



Anne Meeropol plays a song on guitar for her sons, Robert and Michael.

For example, there was an old Japanese maple tree in their backyard, which sent out many new seedlings every year.

"I was the official lawnmower," Robert says, "and I was going to mow over them, and he said, 'Oh, no, you can't kill the seedlings!' I said, 'What are you going to do with them, Dad? There are dozens of them.'

"Well, he dug them up and put them in coffee cans and lined them up along the side of the house. And there were hundreds of them. But he couldn't bring himself to just kill them. It was just something he couldn't do."

Abel Meeropol died in 1986. His sons, Robert and Michael, both became college professors. They're also both involved in social issues. Robert founded the Rosenberg Fund for Children. And he says that even after all these years, he still finds himself unable to kill things in his own garden.

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Man caught raping neighbour's GOAT says women aren't interested in him

18:49, 7 Nov 2016 Updated 18:49, 7 Nov 2016 By Chris kitching

mirror.co.uk

Man caught raping neighbour's GOAT says he had sex with animal after women rejected him at funeral



Mydrim Jones

A man who was nearly killed by an angry mob after he raped a goat says he had sex with the animal because he was rejected by women.

Gabrielle Simiyu was caught in the act by his neighbour late at night and almost lynched by villagers before police officers intervened and saved him.

Outraged residents claimed it wasn't the first time the motorcycle taxi operator had violated farm animals in their village.

They claimed the 26-year-old had previously engaged in sex acts with a cow and chicken.



Mydrim Jones

Gabrielle Simiyu said he had been rejected by women

Simiyu was arrested after the female goat's owner, Richard Wanyonyi, heard bleating and checked his shed in the village of Nangwe, Kenya, on Friday night.

He told KU TV : "I thought my animals were strangling each other so I tiptoed to the cow shed and flashed my torch.

"I was shocked when I found the man but he ran away very fast.

"Since it was at night I did not see him very well so I took the shoes he left behind and began a search in the morning."

Mr Wanyonyi showed the shoes to other motorcycle taxi operators and they told him they belonged to Simiyu.

Police saved him from being lynched by an angry mob, NAIJ reported.

Goat owner Richard Wanyonyi chased the man away

Kenyan media said Simiyu admitted having sex with the animal and pleaded for forgiveness.

He said: "I have a serious problem and need help. Every time I approach a girl she refuses and it really pains me.

"I am appealing to well-wishers to take me to a doctor or a specialist so the problem I have can be identified."



Mydrim Jones

Mr Wanyonyi claimed Simiyu told him he had been rejected by women at a funeral earlier that night.

Police said Simiyu will be charged with bestiality .

DailyMirror

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Man Collects Over 1,200 Pieces Of Prehistoric Poop, Sets Guinness World Record

World | Press Trust of India | Updated: November 13, 2016 13:23 IST

ndtv.com

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Latest News Today



George Frandsen's largest true-to-form fossilised faeces weighs a whopping 1.92 kg.

Washington: A new Guinness World Record has been set for the largest collection of fossilised faeces, by a man in the US who has amassed a whopping 1,277 pieces of prehistoric poop from nine countries.

George Frandsen began his collection as a college student of palaeontology.

The 36-year-old history buff has collected poop from 15 states in the US and eight countries worldwide.

His largest true-to-form coprolite, otherwise known as fossilised faeces, weighs a whopping 1.92 kg.

It was found in South Carolina and dates from the Miocene epoch, 23.8-5.3 million years ago. It was produced by a huge crocodilian species around six metres long.

The coprolites are as hard as a rock and they have no smell.

As required by Guinness World Records, each piece in the collection was inspected by a professional palaeontologist to verify its authenticity.

The collection was documented at the South Florida Museum in the US.

Frandsen's collection appears in the new Guinness World Records 2017 Edition.

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Man dies after beating for peeing near Freiburg church

18/10

thelocal.de



Man dies after beating for peeing near Freiburg church

The Local · 21 Oct 2016, 12:40

Published: 21 Oct 2016 12:40 GMT+02:00

A middle-aged man from southern Germany has died after being attacked by a group of men who took umbrage with the fact he was urinating in the vicinity of a church.

The man's son reported his death to police on October 15th, explaining that he had died several hours after the attack, police reported on Thursday.

According to the son's account, his 51-year-old father was relieving himself near the Johannes Church in Freiburg, in the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg when the altercation occurred.

When the group of four men saw his father urinating in public, they started by insulting him before physically assaulting him, the son said.

While the father had complained of sharp pains in his upper body after the attack, he never called a doctor or the police.

A subsequent postmortem of the deceased man's body revealed that he had in all likelihood died as a result of his injuries.

Police are now searching for the culprits. Three of the men were around 30 years of age, with one described as unusually tall and thin. Another is described as being around 50 years old. All are said to have been of Mediterranean appearance.

The Local Europe GmbH
Schwedter Strasse 227
10435 Berlin
Germany

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Man drove at 129mph to stop his McDonald's getting cold

metro.co.uk



Man drove at 129mph to stop his McDonald's getting cold

Police followed the Renault Clio going at 129mph

Nobody wants to eat a cold McDonald's, but few of us are prepared to go to these lengths to make sure it stays warm.

Lee Rutherford was caught going at 129mph along the A189 in Blyth, Northumberland, after stopping at a drive-thru in February.

Police followed the 32 in his modified Renault Clio, clocking up some incredible speeds.

When asked what the rush was he said he wanted to get home and eat his burger and chips while they were still warm.

He admitted making a false statement to obtain insurance and was found guilty of dangerous driving.



He was given a 20-week prison sentence suspended for a year, banned from driving and ordered to take an extended driving test. He was also ordered to pay £1,120 in fines and costs.

Kyle Patterson, defending Rutherford, told Bedlington Magistrates' Court: 'His driving at such a speed was because he'd been to McDonald's and he wanted his food to still be hot by the time he got home.'

He added that driving at such speeds was 'just daft'.

He said: 'It's a lad in a high-powered car who sees an open road in front of him at a clear time of day and he puts his foot down.'

Lee Rutherford has been given a suspended prison sentence

Prosecutor Lynne Russell said: 'Taking into account the conditions, the officer felt the standard of driving fell far below the standard of a competent driver in those conditions.'

Rutherford had also failed to tell his insurance company that the hatchback had been modified. The modifications included a new air filter and adjustments to the exhaust.



Rutherford bought the car so he could learn how to drive and has held a licence for under two years.

The court heard he has a previous conviction, in 2004, for a drink driving offence. He has since sold the Clio.

Magistrate David Gunn said: ‘The most serious offence is the dangerous driving. We’d say it was excessive speed, in particularly in relation to the conditions on a wet road.’

Mr Gunn said magistrates considered sending Rutherford to prison straight

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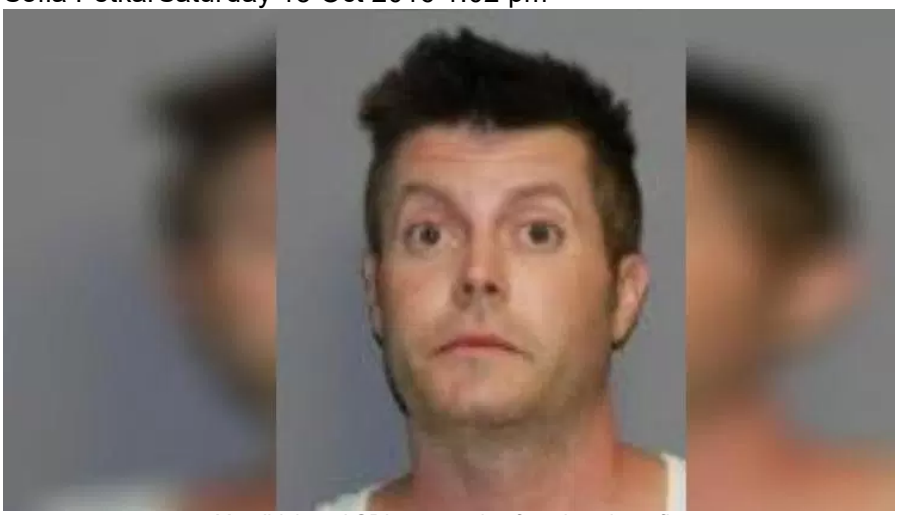
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Man 'high on LSD' rescues dog from imaginary fire

metro.co.uk

Sofia PetkarSaturday 15 Oct 2016 1:02 pm



Man 'high on LSD' rescues dog from imaginary fire

Orchard believed he was rescuing the dog from the non-existent blaze (Picture: WNYT/ police handout)

A 'drugged up' man has smashed through his neighbour's house – to rescue a dog from an imaginary fire.

43-year-old Michael Orchard was reportedly high on LSD and hallucinating when he thought he saw a home engulfed in flame in Halfmoon, New York.

Orchard ran up and down the street banging on doors but was ignored by residents.

The animal lover then chose to take matters into his own hands, and drove his car through the fence before breaking his way into the home.

Police arrived on the scene to find him standing heroically in the street with the large, white (unharmed) dog in his arms.



dog

A news reporter stands next to the door Orchard broke down (Picture: WNYT)

Upon probing, Orchard told police he'd taken LSD with cough medicine.

'He believed that the residence was on fire. And he was rescuing the dog,' Trooper Mark Cepiel told WNYT

He was charged with second degree burglary and third degree criminal mischief – and sent to county jail on $15,000 (£12,300) bail.

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Man In Clown Makeup Accused Of Trespassing With Hatchet

huffingtonpost.com

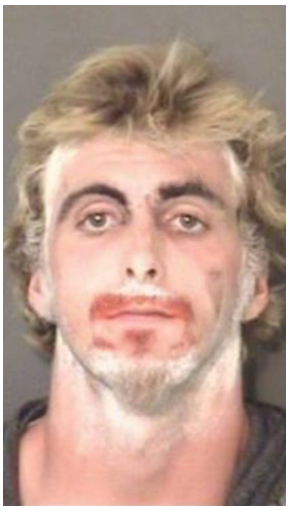
Nothing creepy about this, no sir-ee.

10/11/2016 12:39 pm ET
David MoyeReporter, The Huffington Post

They say “less is more,” and that might even apply to the creep factor of clown makeup.

The proof is in this arrest photo of a man who allegedly trespassed on a gas station’s property while carrying a hatchet.

Deputies in Union County, North Carolina, arrested Travis Quenton Pressley Sunday evening after witnesses reported a man with clown makeup, a ski cap and dark clothing was walking around the store, according to WCNC.com.



Union County Sheriffs Office

The 20-year-old suspect was gone by the time deputies arrived, but he was found a short time later.

It helped that he had clown makeup smeared on his face.

Pressley was charged with second-degree trespassing, carrying a concealed weapon, possession of marijuana up to one-half of an ounce, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

He has since been released from the Union County Jail.

Pressley’s arrest marks the latest creepy clown sighting to occur around the nation this fall.

Clowns have been accused of trying to lure children into the woods in South Carolina and there have been reported sightings in Los Angeles, Hawaii and Wisconsin.

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Man punches beaver, gets treated for rabies

talkradio.co.uk

By Luke Dolan@LJDolan93

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

A man is being treated for rabies after he punched a beaver.

Okay then.

The incident happened in the US state of Virginia. A 52-year-old man standing by the edge of a lake in the city of Falls Church was bitten in the toe by a beaver as it emerged from the water.

We assume he was quite panicked by this, because he ended up sucker-punching the beaver repeatedly in the head. Which seems a slightly excessive punishment, particularly as the beaver didn't even break the skin with its bite.

The man is being given rabies medication as a precaution, because he cut his hand in the process of unloading on the poor rodent.

The beaver slipped away and was unable to be tested - presumably because he was socked to the head several times.

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Man says tree stunt that blocked traffic was performance art

yahoo.com

October 25, 2016

Asso
Pres



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In this Monday, Oct. 24, 2016 photo Asher Woodworth, center left, is dressed as a tree while standing with law enforcement officials near an intersection in Portland, Maine. Woodworth, who was arrested for blocking traffic while dressed as an evergreen tree, says the public display was intended to be performance art. He was released on $60 bail. (Ted Varipatis, WCSH-TV via AP)

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A man arrested for blocking traffic in Maine while dressed as an evergreen tree says the public display was intended to be performance art.

Asher Woodworth tells the Portland Press Herald (http://bit.ly/2eIWl74) his embodiment of a tree inching across a busy downtown Portland intersection was designed to reflect a contrast in the "energies of economy and efficiency and the energies of slowness and magic."

The 30-year-old apparently moved too slowly across the street on Monday. He was arrested for obstructing traffic when he failed to heed a warning by police officers. He was released on $60 bail.

Friend Hamilton Poe knew Woodworth at Bennington College in Vermont and says Woodworth can sometimes "get into trouble in funny ways but never in malicious ways."

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The man who painted trolls, monsters, sea serpents, witches and the Black Death

dangerousminds.net

10.13.2016
Topics:
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Art

Books

Tags:
monsters
trolls
plague
Theodor Kittelsen





The man who painted trolls, monsters, sea serpents, witches and the Black Death

'Skogstroll,' 1890.

Theodor Kittelsen was the man who painted trolls. He spent his life drawing and painting pictures of these beastly supernatural giants.

According to Scandinavian folklore trolls live in caves, woods or mountains far from the plague of humankind. Trolls eat humans. They especially like young humans whose flesh is juicy, sweet and soft.

Understandably, humans don't like trolls—that's why they steer clear of these slow-witted beasts—or if need be hunt them down in packs.

Kittelsen was born in Kragerø, Norway in 1857. He was one of eight children. When his father died, Kittelsen was apprenticed to a watchmaker. He was just eleven years old. He wanted to be an artist but the family's desperate need for money meant he had to work. In his spare time, he sketched and painted. His drawings brought him to the attention of a patron who paid for Kittelsen, now aged seventeen, to attend art school in Oslo and later one in Germany. When his patron's money ran out in 1879, Kittelsen eventually returned home to work as a draftsman for newspapers.

But fortune was still on his side and Kittelsen won a scholarship to study painting in Paris in 1882. Five years later, he returned once again to Norway where he started his career as an artist.

Originally he was painted landscapes and romantic rustic scenes. But through time and by commission, Kittelsen was hired to illustrate Norwegian folktales. So began his career painting and drawing trolls, monsters, witches and supernatural creatures.

Sadly, Kittelsen never made much money out of his troll artwork during his lifetime. Today, he is a star in Norway. Everywhere else—not so much. There is a museum dedicated to his life and work and his paintings and drawings of trolls and the Black Death have featured on numerous album covers by Death Metal and Heavy Metal bands—all of which can be seen here.



'Skogtroll' ('Forest Troll') 1906.



'Trolløye,' 1891.



'The Water Troll Who Eats Only Young Girls,' 1881.

'Ashlad and the Troll' (1900).

'Ashlad beheads the Troll' (1900).



'Røderev and the Ashlad' (1907).

Preparatory work for 'Bonde Veirskjegg' (1887).

Illustration for 'Bonde Veirskjæg' (1887).

'On the way to the feast in Troll Castle' (1892).

'The Monster of the Lake' (1904).

'Grain Restorer in Moonlight' (1900).

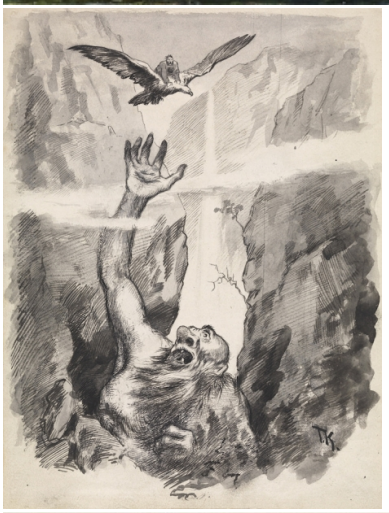




'The Dam at Lake Klouman' (1908).

'Ashlad and the Dragon' (1900).

'Söormen in Aalesund' (1870).





'Nokken Screams' (1911).

'The Old Hag with her Head Under her Arm' (1883).

'The Old Hag with her Head Under her Arm' (1883).

'Milgen, malgen Komlekion' (1891).



Untitled (1876-87).

'The Black Death' ('She covers the country') (1904).

'The Black Death' (1900).

'The Black Death,' ('Mother there comes a witch.') 1900.

'The Black death,' (The plague comes') (1904).

'The Black Death ("The plague climbs up the stairs') (1904).

'The Black Death' (1900).



Via Monster Brains and Wiki Commons.



























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Mystery in Wallingford after mannequin dressed in KKK clothing appears on building

fox61.com

Posted 5:48 PM, September 20, 2016, by Katie Harris and Laura Roberts, Updated at 03:09pm, September 21, 2016

WALLINGFORD -- Who put it there and how did it get there? That's what people in Wallingford are trying to figure out after a mannequin dressed in KKK clothing was spotted in town over the weekend.

Police were called around 7:30 a.m. Saturday to what the caller thought was a person on top of a building on George Street, Wallingford Police Lt. Cheryl Bradley said. It turned out, it wasn't a person. It was buckets and other items made to look like a person.

Police contacted the man who owns the land, but he said he didn't know anything about it, Lt. Bradley said. He gave police permission to take it down.

The mannequin was visible from Route 5, so although it was only up for a few hours, Lt. Bradley said, police received several phone calls about it.

The mannequin would be protected by freedom of speech, Lt. Bradley said. So, other than trespassing on the man's land, there is no criminal element to the case.

The Anti-Defamation League released a statement on the display:

> “ADL has been studying and tracking the Ku Klux Klan since the beginning of the 20th century. I’m glad to report that our Center on Extremism has found a collapse in Klan membership and no active chapters in the state of Connecticut. However, as we saw this weekend, that does not preclude one disturbed individual, or kids trying to shock the community, whatever the case may be, from using these symbols to scare and intimidate the residents of Wallingford.” Steve Ginsburg, Regional Director of the Connecticut ADL said, adding that the Walllingford Police Department had responded promptly and appropriately. “We commend the Wallingford Police for their swift action in taking down the display. This kind of hateful display has no place in our towns or in our country. We hope that the person or people responsible are identified so they can be educated on the impact and history of this detestable imagery.”

• 285 Broad St. Hartford, CT 06115
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Man's 1993 Yearbook Photo Predicts Chicago Cubs Win 2016 World Series

huffingtonpost.com

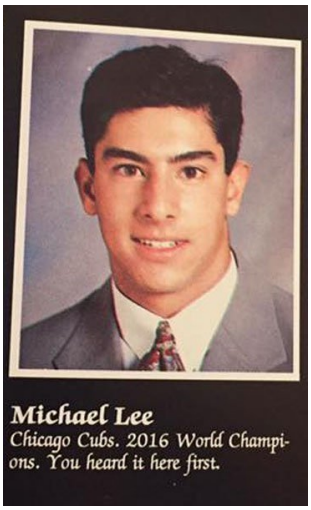
The team hasn't won a World Series since 1908.

10/25/2016 02:30 pm ET | **Updated** 1 day ago
David Moye Reporter, The Huffington Post

Chicago Cubs fans are looking at a 1993 yearbook photo taken in Mission Viejo, California as a sign of good fortune.

The Cubs last won a World Series in 1908, but in 1993, Michael Lee outrageously predicted a World Series win for the Cubs in his yearbook picture.

He cheekily added, "You heard it here first."



WGN TV

The photo has since gone viral after Twitter user Thomas J. Dale posted a photo of the yearbook prediction that he said his mother found.

Admittedly, faking a yearbook pic is well in the realm of a capable photoshop hoaxer.

However, one Reddit user named number1makeitso claims to have found four other copies of the same yearbook, and that Lee's prediction is in those yearbooks as well. The user posted them on Imgur as evidence:

And Lee's former classmate Marcos Meza never forgot the prediction, according to WGN TV.

"When [Lee and I] connected on Facebook in 2009 I sent him the photo and told him we were nearing 2016. He posted the photo of his prediction on August 8th," Meza told the station. "After my Dodgers lost it was time for me to make this go viral and BeLEEve in the Cubs for 2016."

The station has been in contact with Lee, who, fittingly, lives in the Chicago area and is waiting to see if his prediction comes true.

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Related stories creepyla.com

October 19, 2016

If the rumors are to be believed, Marilyn Monroe still gets around. Fifty years after her untimely demise, the ghost of Marilyn has been reported at various locations across the United States, including multiple spots in Los Angeles.

“How is this possible?” asks Yona Williams at Unexplainable.net. “Can she haunt two places at once? Or does she split her time between a wide-range of former stomping grounds?”

While you ponder that question, take a look at out map of places Marilyn’s ghost has been seen around the City of Angels.

1. The home where Marilyn died – 12305 5th Helena Drive, Brentwood, CA 90049: Shortly after midnight August 5th, 1962, Marilyn Monroe’s dead body was discovered inside the bedroom of her Brentwood home, her hand clasping a phone. The coroner’s official cause of death was suicide by pill overdose. Rumors persist that it was murder, covered up to look like an overdose.

Whatever the reason for Marilyn’s passing, her spirit has been reported her on numerous occasions over the years.

The house is no longer for sale, but here’s a peek inside from when it was up for grabs a few years ago:

2. Marilyn Monroe’s grave – Westwood Memorial Park, 1218 Glendon Ave., Los Angeles, CA: Keeping Marilyn’s remains company at this intimate Westwood cemetery are Poltergeist stars Heather O’Rourke and Dominique Dunne, both of whom died at a young age, as well as the recently interred Ray Bradbury. Not surprisingly, Marilyn’s ghost has been spotted near this space, possibly while floating to or from one of her other local haunts. Numerous photos taken of her crypt include “orbs,” but whether these of natural origin, or perhaps indicating the presence of spirits other than Marilyn’s, is up for speculation.

3. Love nest? – Beverly Hilton, 9876 Wilshire Blvd, Beverly Hills, CA: Los Angeles ghost story expert Richard Carradine told CreepyLA, “I believe the ghost of a blonde woman spotted in the penthouse suites is Marilyn Monroe.” Both hotel guests and staff have reported seeing this lovely apparition, which Carradine points out is where Monroe and Senator Bobby Kennedy are rumored to have been seen the night of her suicide.

The Beverly Hilton is also now rumored to be haunted by Whitney Houston who died there recently in an untimely, drug involved incident.

4. Roosevelt Hotel, 7000 Hollywood Boulevard: The most famous of Marilyn Monroe’s ghost sightings is here, where she’s been spotted throughout the hotel. Marilyn’s presence continues to be felt in her favorite room, #1200, and a mirror that once hung there has had many reports of showing her reflection long after her death. Even after the mirror was moved to the lobby area, people reported seeing her reflection. Recently, the mirror was moved into storage.

Richard Carradine told CreepyLA that Kenny Kingston, author of several books on hauntings, claimed that Marilyn materialized in the Cine Grill inside the Roosevelt, in front of him and a witness

when it was otherwise unoccupied. “The perfume she wore lingered in the air,” Carradine relayed.

5. Knickerbocker Hotel, 1714 Ivar Ave.: Not far from Monroe’s most popular “haunt,” the Roosevelt Hotel, is the Knickerbocker Hotel, the site of the infamous Houdini seances following his death. Elvis Presley was a regular here, as was Rudolph Valentino, who now allegedly haunts the place. The hotel has since been converted into senior housing.

Marilyn Monroe was known to frequent the hotel bar with her then husband Joe Dimagio, but it may be a fascination with Valentino that explains her alleged haunting there. Per Richard Carradine, Monroe once told Kenny Kingston, “Too bad he (Valentino) died so young, we would have been great together.” Since her ghost also has been seen at the Knickerbocker, her wish could have come true

—

Have you seen or felt the ghost of Marilyn Monroe, at any of the above locations or elsewhere? Please let us know….

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Mass hysteria: Students 'run amok with tiger-like behaviour and superhuman strength'

asiaone.com

Ng Si Hooi, Nicholas Cheng, R. Aravinthan

Saturday, Nov 12, 2016

Mass hysteria has been afflicting a school in Negri Sembilan, causing 31 students and teachers to simulate tiger-like behaviour.

Harian Metro and Kosmo! reported that the school in Pasoh, bordering the jungles around Tasik Bera, began experiencing strange occurrences where students would crouch around and even fight and scratch each other like the animal.

The students would run amok and fight with apparent "superhuman strength" and have no recollection of what they had done after they snapped out of it.

This all began in August, reported the dailies, after students claimed they saw an old woman resembling a nenek kebayan (witch) loitering around the school area.

"It's not just students, but teachers are also experiencing this. They either see an old woman or a spectre around the school. As soon as they see it, they feel like they are being choked and they find bruises or scratch marks on their bodies," Harian Metro reported, quoting an unnamed source.

It was initially believed the incident was the result of food poisoning in the canteen, but no evidence has been found to prove it.

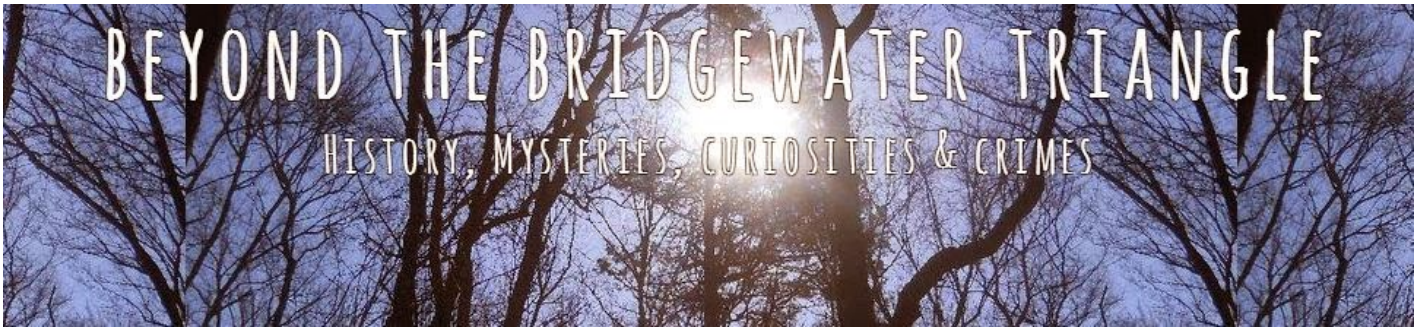
The supposed haunting in the school would usually start at 9am until the afternoon bell rings. This has caused disruptions in classes, exams and extracurricular activity.

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The Bridgewater Triangle Mass UFO Sighting of 1972

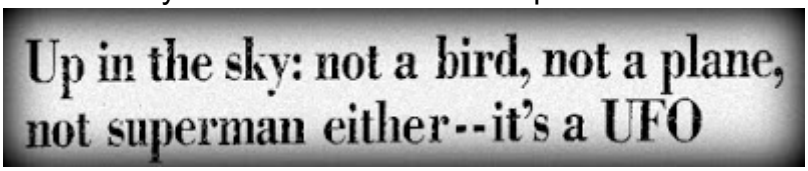
thebridgewatertriangle.com



Many UFOs have been reported seen floating through the skies over Massachusetts' Bridgewater Triangle over the years.
The most famous sighting being in 1979 when two local newsmen would be two of hundreds of people who witnessed a low flying, baseball diamond shaped UFO. Many of those sightings have been reported by local newspapers.

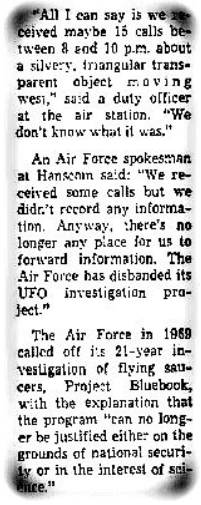
On the evening of July 3, 1972 residents all around the south shore witnessed a large triangular-shaped, shiny and "translucent" object in the sky. The Weymouth Naval Base received numerous calls by alarmed witnesses seeking answers about what the object might have been.

But the Weymouth Naval Base could provide no answer to appease their fear and curiosity.


Up in the sky: not a bird, not a plane, not superman either--it's a UFO

"South Shore residents were still talking excitedly at Fourth of July barbecues and cocktail parties about a weird, unidentified flying object they saw Monday in the evening sky."

"Residents in Scituate, Cohasset, Hingham, Marshfield, Rockland, Pembroke, Hanson, Hanover and Whitman reported spotting the silvery, triangular thing between 7 and 8 p.m. It was apparently the first mass UFO sighting since a rash of flying saucers appeared over New England back in 1966."


"All I can say is we received maybe 15 calls between 8 and 10 p.m. about a silvery, triangular transparent object moving west," said a duty officer at the air station. "We don't know what it was."

An Air Force spokesman at Hanscom said: "We received some calls but we didn't record any information. Anyway, there's no longer any place for us to forward information. The Air Force has disbanded its UFO investigation project."

The Air Force in 1969 called off its 21-year investigation of flying saucers, Project Bluebook, with the explanation that the program "can no longer be justified either on the grounds of national security or in the interest of science."

A Marshfield resident reportedly was among the first to see whatever it was.

"I looked up and saw it --a triangular shaped object that looked like one big wing," he said. "It was translucent and I thought I could see blue sky through it, but its edges were white and well defined...it remained in sight for 45 minutes and then disappeared in cloud cover."
The witness claimed that he was not alone in his bizarre sighting. He reported that at least 25 of of his neighbors could verify his story...because they saw it as well.
Many curious (some downright frightened) witnesses to the strange craft promptly contacted the no defunct South Shore Weymouth Naval Air Station.
"All I can say is we received maybe 15 calls between 8 and 10 p.m. about a silvery, triangular transparent object moving west," said a duty officer at the air station. "We don't know what it was."

Residents also reached out to the further away, Hanscom Air Force Base.

One spokesman from the base said, "We received some calls but we didn't record any information. Anyway, there is no longer any lace for us to to forward information. The Air Force has disbanded its UFO investigation project."

Just three years before the mass UFO sighting of 1972--after 21 years of recording and investigating reports of unidentified flying objects--the Air Force "UFO task force--named Project Bluebook--was dismantled, with the official explanation being that "the project could no longer be justified either on the grounds of national security of the interest of science."

Could it be that the military had attained the answers they had previously sought?

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Massachusetts man founds political Pizza Party

yahoo.com

AP October 3, 2016

Associated Press BOSTON (AP) — Josh Freeman is searching for his slice of the Massachusetts electorate.

The 42-year-old Raynham man is the founder of the Pizza Party, a political designation officially recognized by state election officials.

Freeman tells the Enterprise of Brockton (http://bit.ly/2dF9T6Z) he doesn't recruit members and no Pizza Party candidate has ever run for office or raised any money.

Still, the Pizza Party has enrolled 184 registered voters.

That's enough to have the party listed as a "political designation" on the state secretary's website, but 42,000 or so voters short of being listed as an official party.

With no Pizza Party presidential candidate on the ballot, Freeman plans to vote for Republican Donald Trump.

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Information from: The Enterprise, http://www.enterprisenews.com

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Medical Mystery: Chest pain, a heart attack, and odd bruises

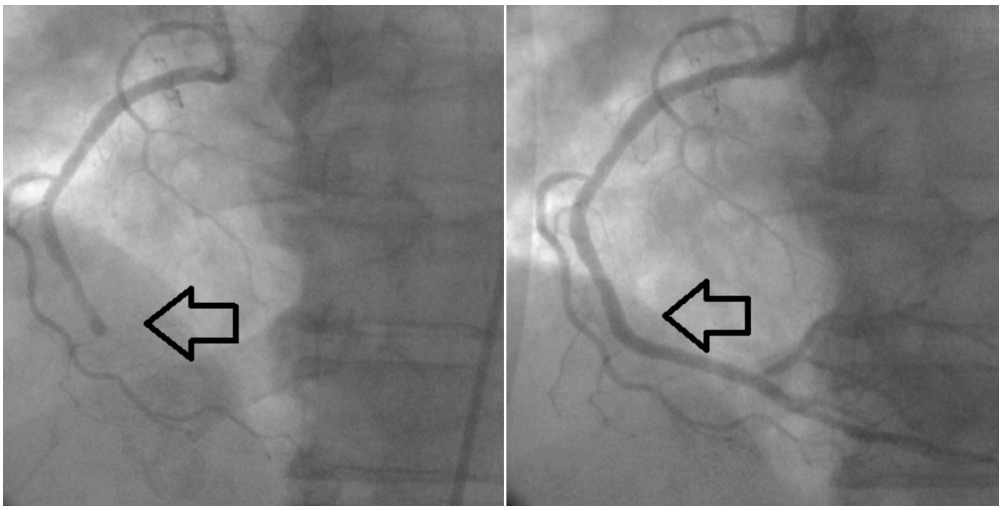
Gregary Marhefka and Michael Savage
20161017

philly.com

The Inquirer DAILY NEWS

A 50-year-old Vietnamese man arrived at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital's emergency department after having suffered for three days with intermittent chest pain. On the day of admission, the chest pain was more severe and persistent.

An electrocardiogram showed that he had suffered acute myocardial infarction, or heart attack. He was taken immediately to the cardiac catheterization laboratory, and coronary angiography revealed a completely blocked coronary artery.



The cause of the heart attack was an occlusion in a coronary artery, pictured left. Shown on the right, the artery opened after a stent placement.

The interventional cardiologist opened the artery with a small balloon and stent. The patient spent several days in the cardiovascular intensive-care unit, with heart failure and cardiogenic shock from his heart attack.

Fortunately, he survived and was ultimately sent home from the hospital on appropriate medical therapy.

But none of our tests gave us a clue as to something else found during the patient's initial physical exam: several circular bruises on his chest.

What could have caused those odd bruises?

Solution:

When his chest pain began, the patient first sought care from an Eastern medicine healer, who performed a common complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) procedure called cupping.

Cupping made national headlines when multiple Olympic athletes were seen last month with similar round bruises on their upper bodies.

Cupping has been in use for thousands of years, and remains popular today in both Eastern and Western cultures. The insides of small glass globes are briefly heated, then the globe is placed on the skin. As the air cools, a suction effect pulls the skin into the glass globe, leaving a well-delineated, circular bruise due to the breaking of small, superficial blood vessels in the skin.

CAM is commonly sought out for a variety of conditions and has been reported to be effective for some ailments. However, in this case, cupping only delayed treatment for a heart attack - a nearly fatal mistake.

If someone has symptoms that could suggest a heart attack such as sudden chest pain, arm and/or jaw pain, or sudden shortness of breath and/or sweating at rest, immediately call 911.

Never drive yourself, or drive someone who is having symptoms, to the hospital. Trained emergency workers are equipped to handle complications that can occur suddenly during a heart attack, such as cardiac arrest. Any delay in treatment of a heart attack leads to more complications and a lower chance of survival.

Gregary Marhefka, M.D., is associate professor of medicine at Sidney Kimmel Medical College and associate director of the cardiovascular ICU at Jefferson University Hospital; Michael Savage, M.D., is Ralph J. Roberts Professor of Cardiology at Kimmel, and director of the cardiac catheterization lab at Jefferson.

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Meet The Artist Selling Human Skulls Online

By Daniel Littlewood with Mor Turgeman
Oct 28, 2016 at 6:39 PM ET

vocativ.com

Zane Wylie carves intricate designs onto human skulls, then sells them for thousands of dollars



HEALTH

Zane Wylie has purchased dozens of human skulls. He carves the bones with intricate designs and sells them on his website, RealHumanSkull.com, for thousands of dollars. But the art of bone carving is complex: It's both technically difficult, and it's increasingly tough to find legally obtained skulls for purchase, as major online retailer eBay prohibited the sale of human remains this year.

Wylie, who uses this pseudonym for his skull caving business, didn't carve the first human skull he bought, which he nicknamed "Yorick." Instead, he carefully studied it. "I was in a program that studied fine muscle movements in the human face," he told Vocativ, and he purchased the specimen to help support his studies. Though he said he was glad to find an excuse to buy a human skull, which had long intrigued him.

Wylie was fascinated by skulls as a young boy — he had a particular interest in Marvel's "Ghost Rider." As an adult, he realized there was a thriving online marketplace for bones and bone carvings, and he decided to try his hand at the art. After experimenting on deer and goat skulls, he moved to the big time — carving on a real human skull.

"I wish I would have clocked how many hours it took me [to carve] the first one," he said. "And it wasn't just because the equipment that I had wasn't the best. It was because I was just so paranoid about doing something wrong and disrespecting what I was carving."

The hours of work paid off, and the intricately decorated skull sold quickly on eBay. After this initial success, Zane purchased more skulls and soon started a full-fledged business, complete with homemade over-the-top promotional videos.

Wylie operates out of his garage in suburban Virginia, and he said that he doesn't mind neighbors checking out his work, though they aren't always very enthused about it. "I'm probably not doing much for the property values around my neighborhood," he said. "But the neighbor kids stay away, and that's okay by me."

With demand for his skulls growing, supply became an issue. In July, eBay changed their terms of service to prohibit the sales of human remains. This decision came on the heels of a Journal of Forensic Sciences investigation that found over 400 examples of skulls offered for sale on the site, 80 percent of which were classified by the researchers as medical or teaching tools.



R7A9078

Wylie said that while concerns over purchasing bones stolen from graves are valid, a close inspection can usually distinguish between legally and illegally obtained remains. “It takes a lot of work to get a skull to the condition to be a medical skull,” he said, referencing the professional cleaning and labeling process that medical specimens undergo. And their pristine condition makes them easy to identify as legitimate. He recalled one skull seller who contacted him over email, offering photos of his wares. Wylie said when he saw dirt visible inside the skulls, “it was obvious that it was grave robbing.”

But, thankfully for Wylie, the eBay ban didn’t end the skull trade. Instead, sellers shifted to platforms that do not prohibit their sale, like Instagram and Facebook, in addition to long-established retail outlets like The Bone Room and Skulls Unlimited.

For now, there are still reputable outlets from which to source these calcium canvases, and the skull carving featured on Vocativ is currently available. Happy Halloween shopping.

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NBA Star Metta World Peace Claims Ghosts Touched Him Inappropriately

huffingtonpost.com

“The ghosts were all over me.”

10/31/2016 08:24 pm ET
David Moye Reporter, The Huffington Post

Los Angeles Lakers star Metta World Peace may have had good reason to feel spooked over the weekend: He claims ghosts touched him inappropriately.

The Lakers were in Oklahoma City to play the Thunder on Saturday, and stayed at the Skirvin Hilton. The hotel is said to be haunted, especially on the 10th floor where visiting NBA teams usually stay, according to NewsOK.com. The supernatural speculation is so strong that Lakers players Lou Williams and forward Larry Nance Jr. booked rooms at another hotel rather than deal with any possible sightings.

World Peace, who stayed at the Skirvin, told the Orange County Register he had an encounter that might be described as astral assault.

“The ghosts were all over me. I just accepted it,” he said. “They touched me all over the place. I’m taking one of the ghosts to court for touching me in the wrong places.”

Despite the cheeky quote, World Peace insisted he was serious. Then he explained why he didn’t run away.

“I was watching a good movie and I was tired. I didn’t want to move,” he said, naming the George Clooney flick, “Money Monster.”

Just as scary as the ghostly groping: Two NBA players, Laker Nick Young and Cleveland Cavaliers star Kyrie Irving, both reported bed bugs from stays at the Skirvin, according to NBA.com.

The hotel doesn’t seem too scared about World Peace’s story. When local station KOCO-TV asked for a comment, the Skirvin released this statement:

> *“At the Skirvin, the only confirmed spirit we have here at the Skirvin is positive spirit of hospitality. In fact, we just celebrated our 105th anniversary, and completed a $4.3 renovation. Happy Halloween.”*

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Mexico City's New Day of the Dead Parade is Based on a James Bond Film

atlasobscura.com

The cultural event first appeared in "Spectre."

by Simon Schatzberg
November 11, 2016



Mexico's famous Day of the Dead traditions might change because of eight minutes of Hollywood film. In a pre-credit sequence in *Spectre*, Sam Mendes' second Bond film as director, and Daniel Craig's last as the title character, 007 thwarts a terrorist plot in during a Day of the Dead parade in downtown Mexico City, chasing the Italian bad guys around giant skeleton floats, and through a crowd of thousands of revelers wearing elaborate costumes. The spectacular sequence features stunning shots of Mexico City landmarks, including the Zócalo, the city's main square, and the Torre Latinoamericana, a towering 1950s skyscraper.

Mexico City fought hard for its eight minutes in *Spectre*. Leaked documents show that Mexican officials offered Sony Pictures millions of dollars in tax incentives in exchange for featuring the capital city in the Bond film. Sony Pictures even let Mexican authorities make certain changes to the script, including featuring a major Mexican actress, Stephanie Sigman, as the "Bond girl" and making the villains another nationality than Mexican.

Bringing Bond to Mexico was part of a project to promote Mexico City as a major tourism destination. Tourism is one of Mexico's main sources of income, bringing the country hundreds of billions of dollars a year, and even surpassing oil revenue in the first part of 2016. Mexican chambers of commerce speak of the "Season of the Dead," running from October 29 to November 2 as an important tourism season, bringing much-needed income to Mexico, especially to certain rural areas.

Large parts of Mexico City's historic downtown had to be shut down to accommodate the filming, which took place over 10 days in March of 2015. The street closures cost 6,500 local businesses over 60 percent of their revenue, totalling at least 376 million pesos (about $20 million) in losses.

Mexico City Tourism Secretary Miguel Torruco Marqués, who was involved in securing the film deal, saw the movie as (expensive) advertising for tourism to Mexico. He assured angry business owners and motorists that the traffic problems and lost revenue would be more than made up for when Mexico City became a "Bond City."

"Bond Cities start booming as soon as the movie comes out," Torruco Marqués told reporters at a press conference on April 1, 2015. "Not only in tourism, but also in investment. There will be a huge



economic boom, and it will make up for the inconveniences."

There was only one problem: the tradition depicted in the movie was completely made up. There are many traditions across Mexico that are associated with Day of the Dead, but a parade through downtown Mexico City has never been one of them. Mexico's tourism authorities found themselves facing a problem: tourists who have seen *Spectre* might come to Mexico City expecting a parade like the one they saw in the movie, and be disappointed to find that it doesn't exist. In order to take advantage of all the exposure they had gained from *Spectre*, they would need to invent a new tradition.



So, on Oct. 29, 2016, Mexico City hosted its first-ever Day of the Dead parade. With over a thousand participants, including professional dancers, choreographers and visual artists, and dozens of floats and giant sculptures for the first edition, the parade aims to attract hundreds of thousands of visitors to Mexico City in the future. Torruco Marqués said that it could even compete with the Rio de Janeiro Carnival for the title of the world's biggest parade.

The event was presented as a showcase of diverse Day of the Dead traditions and art from around Mexico. It also got some more use out of the costumes and props from *Spectre*.

Tourism authorities made no attempt to hide the fact that the parade was based on the James Bond movie—they referred to it as a "*Spectre*-style parade" in press communications (but they took out the parts with the collapsing buildings and helicopter tricks).

The artists who worked with the parade created modern dialogues with Mexican rituals surrounding death. Part of the parade was devoted to the tradition of la Muerte Niña, the mostly-defunct practice of creating family portraits—first oil paintings, later photographs—with recently-deceased children dressed up in extravagant clothing, sometimes as angels with heavenly crowns.

At the 2016 parade, a retro-modern reimagining of la Muerte Niña appeared as adult women seated in meticulously preserved classic cars filling in for cradles, wearing festive colors and holding balloons.

From a tourism standpoint, the event was a success: attendance was higher than anyone expected, and attracted many foreign visitors. City government estimates say that 425,000 people lined the streets running from the Angel of Independence to the Zócalo. Few other events could have brought so many people out in Mexico City—not a protest march, not even a free Roger Waters concert.



It's too soon to say how much tourism income the parade brought to Mexico City, but a forecast by a chamber of commerce estimated about a billion pesos (about $50 million) in income for Mexico City businesses related to the parade and the Formula 1 Grand Prix, which took place the same weekend.

However, many Mexicans are offended by the government's enthusiastic support for an invented ritual based on a Hollywood movie. Magaly Alcantara Franco, a student at the National School of History and Anthropology, believes the parade was influenced more by potential tourists' perceptions of Mexico than by Mexican traditions themselves.

"For me, what I saw that Saturday didn't represent, not even minimally, what the Day of the Dead celebrations are," she says. "It was based on an idea that isn't even Mexican, an idea that was imported from Hollywood."



Claudio Lomnitz, a professor of Mexican studies at Columbia University, wrote an editorial for *La Jornada* criticizing the parade. "There's an element of what we could call 'national-narcissism,' of a national imaginary in love with its own image, reflected in the mirror of Hollywood," Lomnitz writes.

This isn't the first time that rituals surrounding death have been manipulated by the Mexican state for political purposes. As Lomnitz shows in his book *Death and the Idea of Mexico*, the late-fall death festival was born out of an effort by the Catholic Church to accommodate indigenous death customs with All Souls' Day and All Saints' Day. Later, efforts by the revolutionary state to build national identity led to the holiday's current form and level of popularity.

For Lomnitz, what's different about the new parade is that it is only a representation or performance of the Day of the Dead—the parade represents an image of Mexican culture, composed with the views of foreigners in mind.

Due to the success of the first incarnation of Mexico City's Day of the Dead parade, it will probably become a yearly tradition. The event is essentially a Day of the Dead digest, a show, rather than a participatory tradition. But for a short-term visitor who wants to see Mexican death culture, it might be exactly what you're looking for.

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Michaelmas in Irish Folklore

wordpress.com

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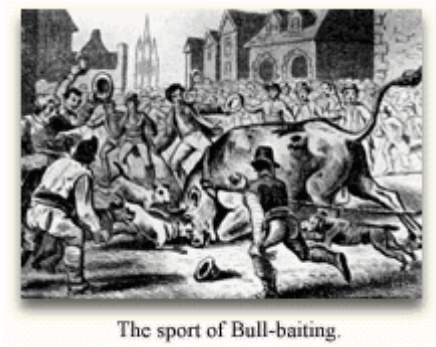
Posted on September 29, 2016September 28, 2016 by nevswift



Postcard uncredited

Michaelmas is the feast-day of the Archangel Michael and is traditionally observed throughout Ireland on the 29th September. A host of tradition is attached to this date, for example, male children born on, or near, Michaelmas were often called Michael or Micheál in his honour. While in Swinford, County Mayo, in the early twentieth century, Michaelmas had a special significance; as many locals returned to Swinford from working the harvest in England on, or before, the day of the feast, according to John Millington Synge the returned harvesters would be, 'sitting around in each other's houses playing cards through the night, and a barrel of ale set up among them.'

As with many Irish calendar customs food took a central role in the activities of the day. An animal – usually a goose, which was generally referred to as a Michaelmas Goose, was slaughtered and eaten in honour of the saint. John Hannon in his 1870 book *Irish Folklore* maintained that a sheep used to be slaughtered by those who could afford it on Michaelmas day, while he also states that it was 'ordained by law that a part of the animal must be given to the poor. This is said to have been done, in order to perpetuate the memory of a miracle wrought by St Patrick, through the assistance of that Archangel.'



The sport of Bull-baiting.

uncredited

Michaelmas also acted as a marker for certain civic and domestic activities. In many Irish towns, including Drogheda, Dublin and Kilkenny, the Mayor took office on Michaelmas Day. Up until the first decades of the 19th century, on the feast day of Saint Michael, a bull was baited* at a bull-ring situated near Saint Francis Abbey in Kilkenny. In some areas Michaelmas was one of the two annual rent days, previously known in Ireland as Gale Days, (the other being the 25 March), in place of the more usual Gale Days of the first days of May and November. Domestically the woman of the house started slaughtering the foul at Michaelmas, with the first goose slaughtered becoming the "Michaelmas Goose", while for the men, the day marked the beginning of the fox and hare hunting seasons, and, in many parts of Ireland, the end of the fishing season.

Otherworldly creatures were active at Michaelmas, and children were warned not to eat blackberries after Michaelmas eve, as it was believed that the púca flies through the county defiling the blackberries on that night.** Michaelmas was also a time for divination; a Michaelmas cake was baked on the night of Michaelmas with a ring mixed through the dough, exactly as is still done on Hallowe'en. Portions of the cake were then distributed amongst any unmarried persons who were present, with the belief that whomever discovered the ring was destined to be wed before next Michaelmas.

*Bull-baiting typically involved a bull being attacked by dogs, while trapped in an area, often a pit of some kind.

**The púca, sometimes spelled pooka, is a shape-shifting spirit that most commonly takes the form of a horse, but can also take the form of other animals, it was also said that the púca defiled blackberries on Hallowe'en.

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Mid Suffolk District Council apologises after issuing letter directing residents to porn website

buryfreepress.co.uk



09:5311:39Friday 28 October 2016

A Suffolk council has apologised after 80 residents received a voter registration letter which asks them to log on to a pornographic website.

Mid Suffolk District Council issued the letter to residents in the Claydon and Barham wards asking them to confirm who lives at their address to check who is eligible to register to vote.

However, the website given for residents to respond actually directs them to a porn site.

Mike Evans, strategic director for Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils, has apologised for the ‘embarrassing mistake’.

He said the letter was a second reminder to chase up residents who hadn’t responded to an initial communication on registering to vote.

He said the inclusion of the x-rated web address was a ‘technical slip’.

Mr Evans added: “Sending out this web address was absolutely not our intent and we apologise unreservedly to anyone who received it.

“It is unfortunate that the mail merged form produced for Mid Suffolk from the anonymous data on our system has led to this unacceptable mistake. It should not have happened and we are putting it right.”

A letter of apology will be hand delivered to all those affected later today or over the weekend.

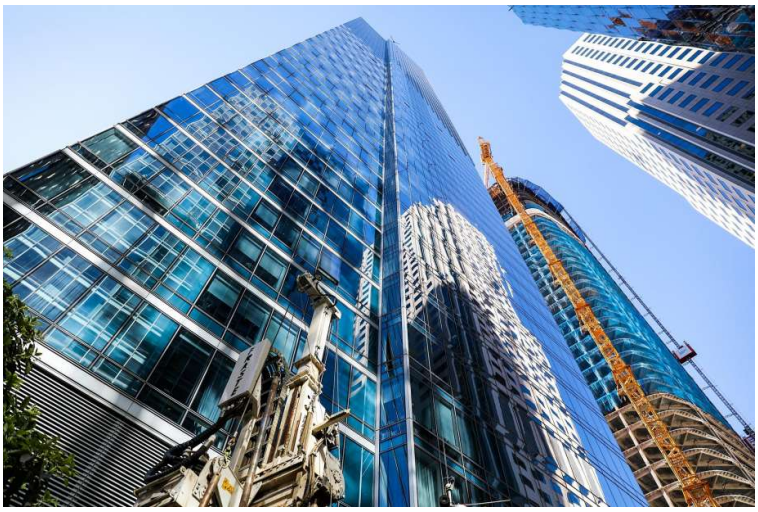
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Millennium Tower resident posts video of rolling marble to demonstrate building's tilt

By Alyssa Pereira
Updated 1:14 pm, Tuesday, November 1, 2016

sfgate.com

http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Millennium-tower-resident-posts-video-of-rolling-10438816.php



A Millennium Tower resident named Frank Jernigan posted a video on Vimeo last week in an effort to demonstrate the building's tilt, which is being caused by the structure's sinking.

The 58-floor tower, which contains luxury apartments, has sunk a total of 16 inches and is now tilting at least two inches.

In a video Jernigan claims was shot in the building, a marble is rolled on a hardwood floor, but then it changes direction, ostensibly provoked by a tilt.

Marble roll in Millennium Tower from Frank Jernigan on Vimeo.

Although an engineer named Ronald Hamburger determined in early October that the Millennium Tower was safe in the event of a big earthquake, the building's residents aren't convinced. Several residents have sued the building's developer, Millennium Partners, claiming the value of their condos has dwindled due to safety concerns.

Millennium Partners are claiming the unforeseen sinking is due to the Transbay Joint Powers Authority dewatering, which the Partners' spokesman says "[has] drastically dropped the water table beneath 301 Mission St. and has caused excessive settlement."

Next, San Francisco will test Hamburger's findings in a rigorous peer review process to conclude how safe the building truly is. For more on the state of the Millennium Tower, read the San Francisco Chronicle's most recent report.

Read Alyssa Pereira's latest stories, and follow her on Twitter at @alyspereira. Send her news tips at apereira@sfchronicle.com.

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Solved: Missing Head of Baby Jesus Is Back

And that means curtains for the odd 'demonic hedgehog' head that replaced it

By Linda Hervieux, Newser Staff
Posted Oct 24, 2016 7:03 AM CDT



The head of baby Jesus has been returned to its place in an Ontario churchyard. (CBC)

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(NEWSER) – The caper of the missing baby Jesus head has been solved. A woman who snatched the head from the statue in a churchyard in Canada returned it after the story became international news, the CBC reports. That happened after a local artist sculpted a new noggin in red terra cotta with lizard-like eyes and spiky hair a la Maggie Simpson—and drew global scorn for her trouble. The head of baby Jesus, cradled in the arms of a sedate Virgin Mary, has been a frequent target of vandals at the Sainte-Anne-des-Pins Catholic church in Sudbury, Ontario. After the latest theft, the pastor said he would forgo ordering a replacement that could cost as much as $10,000.

That's when local artist Heather Wise stepped in, crafting a "temporary replacement" that one Twitter user likened to ET and another to a "demonic hedgehog." After reading about the dust-up, a local woman said to be suffering from personal problems returned the head on

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applause at Sunday Mass. (Fans were less than thrilled with this "scary" Lucille Ball statue.)

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SS BdM Fuhress 'Savannah Oct 24, 2016 7:56 PM CDT
Now it was carrot tops (the comedians) head in the one dream when he called me a doctor. In the other dream where he acknowledged Lord Stratos is the Power it was as you see in the books!

EdCoulter Oct 24, 2016 6:17 PM CDT
Baby Jesus is adorable

curly4 Oct 24, 2016 2:16 PM CDT
What is the out cry for? It is only a symbol and has no meaning. There should not be any out rage at all for it is only christian. Now if it had been a symbol of Islam (yes,I know that they don't use images) or a symbol of some rights group OUTRAGE would have been apropos, christians are so sensitive.

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Move along, Bozo: Mississippi county bans clowns for now

yahoo.com

AP October 20, 2016
Asso Creepy clown masks are displayed at a Halloween store in the Brooklyn borough of New York
Pres City, U.S. October 20, 2016. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid

DEKALB, Miss. (AP) — A Mississippi county has had enough of the creepy clown craze, at least until after Halloween.

Kemper County supervisors this week banned people from wearing any clown costume, mask or makeup in public. The local law carries a $150 penalty, and it will be lifted Nov. 1.

The Kemper County Messenger reports (http://bit.ly/2epYioO) that supervisors President Johnny Whitsett says it's a matter of public safety because people could react badly if they get scared by a clown in their yard.

The county along the Alabama line has a population of about 10,000.

Lee Rowland, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney in New York, says the First Amendment protects most clothing choices. She also says it's "a ridiculous use of government authority .... to dictate which Halloween costumes people can wear."

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Man fights for 'Mona Lisa' passport smile

sky.com

Man goes to court over right to 'Mona Lisa' passport smile

The civil servant's "discreet smile" was rejected and now he wants the rule banning smiling overturned.

16:34, UK, Thursday 29 September 2016



The Mona Lisa's enigmatic expression has been referenced in court

A Frenchman is fighting to overturn a ban on passport photos which show the person smiling, claiming the rule is keeping people depressed.

A citizen who French media are calling "Thierry" has gone to court to challenge the regulation.

He took up the case after his Mona Lisa-esque passport photo was rejected because it showed a "slightly ironic grimace that borders on a discreet smile", according to Le Parisien.

The man, understood to be a 40-year-old senior civil servant, has accused the French state of "abuse of power".

In a letter sent to French news agency AFP, the man asks: "Is it responsible, in a depressed France, for the authorities to accuse people if they smile?"

French passport rules, like those in the UK, state that: "The subject must adopt a neutral expression and should not smile."

The British rule is understood to have been brought in with the introduction of biometric passports which allow the features of a face to be compared with those held in a database.

Because the width of a smile varies, it can leave facial recognition technology unable to verify a person's identity.

The lawyer for "Thierry", Romain Boulet, claims a previous court judgment that banned smiling was incorrect and based on a note with no legal value.



The man says smiley photos would "give the French a friendly face" at airports

He argues the law simply states that subjects must look at the camera, maintain a neutral expression and keep their mouths shut - with no mention of not smiling.

In his submission, Mr Boulet referred to Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa, famous for its subject sporting an enigmatic half-smile.

For over 500 years people have wondered if the Mona Lisa is smiling," said the lawyer.

"That so many leading experts have failed to agree on this, shows that it is not (for) the authorities to determine whether a smile is neutral or not."

Allowing French people to smile on their passport photos would "give the French a friendly face" when they arrive "at borders around the world", Mr Boulet added.

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Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 17 February 1890, page 6

LORD EUSTON'S LIBEL CASE.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

London, January 17, 1890

The trial of Mr. Ernest Parke for criminally libelling the Earl of Euston came on at the Old Bailey on Wednesday morning before Mr. Justice Hawkins and a special jury. The prosecutor arrived early, accompanied by his solicitor, Mr. George Lewis, and the pair were presently joined by Sir Chas. Russell, Q.C., M.P., whose brief on dit was marked "five hundred guineas." Mr. Lockwood, Q.C., M.P., and Mr. Asquith, M.P., represented the defendant Parke, and several other barristers held watching briefs on behalf of parties whose names did not transpire.

Sir Chas. Russell opened the case for the prosecution with dry brevity, repeating the story of his client's visit to Cleveland street, which Lord Euston told at the Police Court. As his lordship, said Sir Chas., had only been to the house once, and then but for a minute or two, nothing would have been easier than for him to have denied knowing anything at all of the place. He preferred, however, to be perfectly straightforward, and had frankly confessed to a grave imprudence. In the plea of justification put in by the defendant it was alleged that Lord Euston had visited 19, Cleveland street, on several occasions. The defence having taken that course, and elected practically to place Lord Euston on his trial, Sir C. Russell proposed, subject to any view the learned judge might express upon the matter, not to call the prosecutor until they had seen by what evidence it was proposed to substantiate the plea of justification.

The judge remarked that he did not feel justified in expressing any opinion upon the point.

Mr. Lockwood commented on the course pursued by the prosecution in keeping the Earl of Euston out of the witness-box until there should have been a chance of discrediting by cross-examination the witnesses in support of the plea of justification. He agreed with Sir Charles as to the seriousness of the charge, and as to the seriousness of the plea put on the record by the defendant; but he proposed to place evidence before the jury which would satisfy them that Lord Euston had been in the habit of visiting 19, Cleveland street. Some of the evidence might be open to the charge of being tainted, but it was obvious that in a case of this kind it was only evidence of that class that they could expect to find. As to the part of the plea of justification, which alleged that the publication of the libel was for the public good, he apprehended that, if the libel was shown to be true, there would be no substantial difference of opinion upon that point.

A number of persons resident in Cleveland-street and neighborhood were then called, and identified Lord Euston as an habitué of No. 19. Being mostly ignorant working people it was not a difficult task for Sir Charles Russell to confuse these witnesses, and turn their evidence into ridicule. Nevertheless the impression left on a great many people in court was that they were, to the best of their belief, speaking the strict truth.

The last witness called was John Saul, who gave his evidence with a brazen effrontery that reduced the court to shocked silence.

John Saul, replying to Mr. Lockwood, said—I live at 15, Old Compton street, Soho. In 1879 I knew a man named Charles Hammond, who was then living at 35, Oxenden street, off the Haymarket. He moved to 19, Cleveland street, just after Christmas, 1885. At about the end of March I went to live there. During the time I was there I remember many persons coming to the house.

Do you see any person here in this court whom you have seen at Hammond's house, 19, Cleveland street, at any time?—One gentleman I recognise that I took there myself if I am not thoroughly mistaken. (Witness here pointed to Lord Euston.)

When was that?—Some time at the end of April or the beginning of May, 1887.

Where did you meet this person?—In Piccadilly, not far from the Albany Courtyard, near Sackville street—nearly opposite the Yorkshire Grey.

As the witness was proceeding to give evidence of a character which renders it unfit for publication, there was some demonstration of disapproval from that portion of the court allotted to the public.

Mr. Lockwood said he hoped his task would not be rendered more difficult by such exhibitions of feeling.

Mr. Justice Hawkins said if this sort of thing was repeated he should order the court to be cleared. The evidence was filthily brutal and disgusting, but it was necessary to hear it. So far as this witness was concerned he afforded a shocking spectacle.

Examination continued—I saw Lord Euston on a second occasion when Frank Hewett and Newlove were there.

Cross-examined by Sir C. Russell—Since just before Christmas I have been living at Akerman road, Brixton, with a very respectable man named Violet, who is taking care of me. I gave my evidence to Inspector Abberline at the beginning of August. I met Violet at the private enquiry office at Westminster. I remember the prosecution of Newlove and Veck. I don't recollect Taylor, or Lovelock, or Swinscow, or Stedden, or Thickbroom, or Wright.

Have you any means of earning your bread?—No, sir.

I see you have a ring on your finger?—It's not my fault, or it would have been gone long ago. It's only paste. (Laughter.)

And a silver headed cane?—Oh, that's not much—1s. 6d., no more. I bought it in the Brixton road. Mr. Violet lets me have money sometimes and supplies me with everything I want. I was concerned in committing an indecent offence in Dublin in 1875, and since I have been in London I have tried to earn an honest living, but have not been able to get a character. The police and detectives have always been kind to me here. I offered my evidence in Dublin some years ago, but it was not used. I was employed a little while at Drury lane Theatre in "The Royal Oak." I expressed my willingness to give evidence for Mr. Parke, but for nobody else. I was not then aware that a considerable sum of money was being raised to help Mr. Parke.

You don't suggest that you knew the defendant?—No; I thought he was acted very unfair with.

And your sense of justice prompted you to help him?—Yes.

When you went to Webb's office and made your statement were any photographs produced?—Yes, two.

Were they both photographs of Lord Euston?—One was, and the other was a photograph of a man named Carrington.

Sir C. Russell observed that he had no intention of introducing other names, and regretted

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 17 February 1890, page 6

tion of introducing other names, and regretted that the witness had mentioned any

Mr. Justice Hawkins agreed that it was undesirable to introduce the names of persons who were not before the court.

Did you recognise the photograph of Lord Euston?—Yes; by his face, and by his big white teeth and his moustache.

Where did you first learn Lord Euston's name?—Along Piccadilly, not long after I first met him.

In re-examination witness said he made his original statement to Inspector Abberline's clerk.

This closed the case for the defendant.

Lord Euston then went into the box, and denied having ever seen Saul before. He was severely cross-examined by Mr. Asquith, but did not give away much.

Mr. Lockwood then briefly addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant, severely criticised Lord Euston's moral estimate of "poses plastiques," and suggested that he had only admitted going to 19, Cleveland street, once because he had reason to fear that on one occasion at least he had been observed. The story was one which he asked the jury unhesitatingly to reject, the more so because—apart from John Saul—Sir Charles Russell had failed to shake either the credibility or the respectability of the witnesses for the defence.

Sir C. Russell, on behalf of Lord Euston, submitted that the libel had been proved, and that the defendant had absolutely failed to establish his plea of justification. There had been laid before the court loose and most unsatisfactory evidence of identification in connection with the alleged visits to Cleveland street, while the foully-tainted testimony of John Saul was such that no one would imperil the life even of the meanest of God's creatures upon it. If a man's life were involved in this case he felt sure the jury would not accept it. Throughout this matter Lord Euston had behaved as an honest and straightforward man would behave.

The judge summed up dead against the defendant, exposing clearly enough the extraordinary weakness of the luckless young journalist's case. Dealing with the plea of justification, his lordship said there was not a particle of evidence to prove that Lord Euston left this country fearing arrest in connection with the Cleveland street case. No evidence had been adduced to attempt to substantiate this allegation, and he was sorry it had been introduced. Five persons were called to state that they saw Lord Euston go in and out of the house in Cleveland street. In cases of identity it was necessary that a witness should not only be honest but intelligently observant. The first witness could not recognise Lord Euston by his features, but picked him out by the prosecutor walking two or three yards along the court. The second witness (Smith) said the man they saw go into the house was dressed in a dark frock coat, while O'Loughlin, who was with Smith at the time, said he wore a light grey suit. The photograph afterwards shown O'Loughlin depicted Lord Euston in a grey suit, and it was subsequent to seeing that that the witness swore he recognised the prosecutor at Hyde Park corner as the man seen in Cleveland street. Smith knew Lord Euston by his trousers, which he said were baggy, but yesterday he wore a frockcoat, and from where the witness stood the extraordinary trousers—if existing—could not be seen. Then again Lord Euston was 6 feet 4 inches, and the witnesses had spoken of 5 feet 8 inches, a vast difference in the height of a man. The two pot boys or barmen out of work, swore positively to seeing Lord Euston in Cleveland street, and yet when the enquiry agent called upon them they were shown the photograph and asked "Is that the man you mean." In all cases it was better to give witnesses an opportunity of relying upon their own knowledge rather than that the identification should be refreshed by the sight of the portrait of the person sought to be identified. No doubt Mrs. Morgan had an opportunity of learning the character of the house in Cleveland street, but although she had seen 50 or 60 persons enter the house the witness swore that the only person she would be able to recognise was Lord Euston. No doubt the jury would have liked to see the "man with a big stick," who took O'Loughlin to identify Lord Euston; "the little black man" who did the same with Mrs. Morgan; and Captain Webb, whose name had been mentioned. Turning to the evidence of "that creature Saul," the learned judge said a more melancholy spectacle he had never witnessed. He hoped for the honor of the police of this city that it was not true that they had dealt kindly with him. Lord Euston had said that Saul's evidence was as foul a perjury as a man could commit. The jury would have to ask themselves whether they preferred the oath of a man who had committed crimes confessedly for which he might be sent to penal servitude (and he marvelled much that no one had suggested that the man should be prosecuted), or that of Lord Euston. The man Saul had stated that he was now under the care of someone, that he was living on the fat of the land, and that he—the vilest of vile creatures—was allowed to walk abroad. The man had sworn that in August he gave his statement with regard to Lord Euston to Inspector Abberline, and if confirmation of it could be obtained the judge, as one of the public, had a right to know why a warrant was not at once issued against Lord Euston. Failing corroboration of this creature's tale it would have been gross cruelty to Lord Euston to act upon it. The wretch's story had not been spoken to by any other witness. Saul had coupled the names of Hewitt and Newlove with that of Lord Euston. Hewitt had left the country, whether for good or bad, but Newlove, although not within the sound of the judge's voice, was within the reach of the cab. Why had not the diligent enquiry office suggested that Newlove should have the photograph shown him? Beside that not one single individual who had ever been connected with the house in Cleveland street had been called to speak to seeing Lord Euston in the house. Some of the boys were in the country, and could have been called. Whether high or low, rich or poor, every man was entitled to justice, and to say, "If you make a charge against me prove it." Another striking fact to be remembered was that since a certain date in 1887, although Saul had stated that he often saw Lord Euston in Piccadilly, he never had any communication with him; nor being pinched with poverty did he appeal for any money to the man who, if his story was true, was in his power. It was conceded that it was to the public interest that certain things should be made known, but it was to the last degree inexpedient, unjust, and cruel that matters reflecting seriously upon the character of an individual should be made public unless there was solid foundation for it. The whole question was whether Lord Euston had

Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931), Monday 17 February 1890, page 6

unless there was solid foundation for it. The whole question was whether Lord Euston had been proved a miscreant or was he entitled to the verdict that the case had not been proved.

The jury retired at 1.5, and returned into court at 1.45 with a verdict of guilty, and that the justification was not proved.

Mr. Mathews called attention to the fact that the prisoner had stated in his newspaper that if the libel was not proved he had no desire to escape the natural consequences. He wished the judge to further notice that on the 30th November the prisoner published a portrait of Lord Euston, although he had been returned for trial on the 26th November.

The judge—Well, no one would recognise Lord Euston's picture.

Mr. Parke having obtained permission to speak, said throughout the whole case he had acted in perfect good faith, and had published what he conceived to be to the public interest. He did not print the libel without having evidence to support it, but what that evidence was he could not say.

The Judge—The libel is an exceedingly bad one; but if you would like to have until to morrow to give me any information which you think would alter my view of the matter you shall do so, but at present as the evidence stands I see none that was in your possession at the time the libel was published.

Mr. Parke—I can only state that I had evidence in my possession.

The Judge—Yes, but it is a very serious thing to publish in a paper having a circulation of 4,000 or 5,000 copies, imputations of a horrible character.

Mr. Parke said that with regard to the first point raised by Mr. Mathews, he would have to abide by the result, but the portrait of Lord Euston was published for precisely the same reasons as it appeared in many other papers. Among other evidence at time of publication he had Saul's statement.

The Judge—At the present moment I fail to see any evidence which would justify, morally, the publication of the libel upon which the jury have returned a verdict of guilty. It was for that reason I desired to give you an opportunity of putting before me any matter which would in any way palliate or mitigate your guilt. I do not think I could allow you to remain under the impression for a moment that anything in your statement shows you honestly believed the libel true when you published it. As a matter of course, I could not be satisfied with your bare statement. At present it stands in my mind as a very atrocious libel without any justification, in fact, all the witnesses had their evidence taken after the hearing before the magistrate. You shall have until to morrow morning if you like to think it over, or have any communication with your counsel.

Mr. Roskill thought it better for all parties that the matter should be decided.

The Judge said that that being the case he would say that there was never a more atrocious libel. The prisoner had before him nothing more than rumor that Lord Euston had been guilty of an abominable crime, for which he would have been liable to be sent into penal servitude for life, a sentence which would have been hardly sufficiently expressive of the horror felt at a gentleman in his position being guilty of so wicked and grave a crime. The prisoner suggested he had other evidence. He could hardly credit the statement, and at least it was shown that the prisoner could place no reliance upon it. A plea which said that others advised the publication he would never tolerate. He had expressed himself as strongly as a man could do, and he felt compelled to say that he absolutely and entirely agreed with the verdict of the jury. He did not believe it would have been possible to find in England twelve men who conscientiously, honestly, and carefully looking at the evidence, could have come to any other conclusion than that this was a wicked libel, published without any justification, and endeavored to be supported by testimony absolutely unworthy of credence. He would pass a sentence which, he hoped, besides being a punishment, would be a warning to others not to publish such libels. The sentence would be one of 12 months' imprisonment.

The prisoner, who received his sentence with composure, was then removed to the cells.

It is only fair to Mr. Parke's intelligence and to the common sense of his legal advisers to explain that when he embarked on the plea of justification he fully expected to be able to produce a number of witnesses who were non est on Wednesday. Where they disappeared to and who provided them with funds to go the luckless young journalist has not been able to ascertain. He soon found indeed that a much longer purse than his would be necessary to make any sort of a fight against the prosecution. The private enquiry agents he employed were no kind of match for Mr. Geo. Lewis. As a last straw, too, police assistance suddenly dried up, and poor Parke had to choose between going to prison and violating the confidence of the detective who originally supplied him with the story. Had he done this he might have got off with six months less, but the detective would certainly have been turned out of the force. The judge, who was quite shrewd enough to see that there was more in the affair than met the eye, offered to adjourn the case in order to give Parke an opportunity of showing on what evidence he had really acted. The defendant ought undoubtedly to have taken advantage of this, but his nerves were completely demoralised by the long strain. "I would rather," he said, "know my fate at once."

The following shows the rainfall throughout the colony for the 24 hours ending at 9 a.m. on Saturday :—

Port Darwin ..	0 140	Menindie ..	0 080
River Katherine ..	0 700	Robe ..	0 960
Daly Waters ..	2 430	Beachport ..	0 040
Powell's Creek ..	0 140	C Northumberland	0 060
Strangways Springs	0 020	Frances ..	0 010

COMEDY

Lou Dobbs' Rant About 'Mormon Mafia' Becomes Twitter's Best New Hashtag

Don't mess with Mormons.

10/27/2016 01:58 am ET | **Updated** 6 hours ago

Ed Mazza
Overnight Editor

Fox Business host Lou Dobbs recently fired off an angry tweet about Evan McMullin, the third-party conservative running neck-and-neck with GOP nominee Donald Trump in Utah.

McMullin's strong showing is threatening to hand the state to Democrat Hillary Clinton, or he could win the state's six electoral votes himself — a notion that has Trump supporters such as Dobbs steamed enough to blame a "Mormon Mafia."

> **Lou Dobbs** Follow
> @LouDobbs
>
> Look Deeper, He's nothing but a Globalist, Romney and Mormon Mafia Tool #MAGA #AmericaFirst #TrumpPence16 #TrumpTrain #Dobbs twitter.com/trumpresdent/s…
>
> 7:56 PM - 22 Oct 2016
>
> 2,239 2,393

Although the tweet was published over the weekend, it was widely retweeted late Wednesday and led to the birth of a new hashtag: #MormonMafia.

Here's a sampling:

TRENDING

Female Lawyer Accuses Justice Clarence Thomas Of Groping Her In 1999

Donald Trump Stands A Real Chance Of Being The Biggest Loser In Modern Elections

Donald Trump's Campaign Knows He's Losing

Donald Trump Adviser Isn't Even Quite Sure What His Boss Is Doing

Oath Keepers Founder Says 'Undercover' Poll Watching Effort Won't Intimidate Voters



Philip Moon
@Philip_R_Moon

Follow

Not only is there a #MormonMafia, they have biker gangs running the streets

9:35 PM - 26 Oct 2016

1,612 3,393

Bill Maurer
@wmaurerij

Follow

"Funny like a clown? I amuse you? Good. I like making people happy. Have a great day!" #MormonMafia

10:03 PM - 26 Oct 2016

15 33



Carl Gustav
@CaptYonah

Follow

"You're gonna get on that bicycle, go door-to-door and give out pamphlets...and you're gonna like it." #MormonMafia

8:26 PM - 26 Oct 2016

80 220

Sunny (Mat)
@sunnyright

Follow

"Gosh darn it, you messed with the wrong fellows this time, you nincompoop!" #MormonMafia

8:33 PM - 26 Oct 2016

140 508

Jennifer Rubin
@JRubinBlogger

Follow

If you're not careful Mormon Mafia will break into your house ---- fold the laundry and do the dishes

8:16 PM - 26 Oct 2016

737 2,215



Deport Trump
@MustDeportTrump

Follow

You take out one of ours, we take out one of yours #MormonMafia

9:39 PM - 26 Oct 2016

15 39

Shaun Jex
@shaunmjex

Follow

Don't anger the #MormonMafia. They don't give a gosh darn.

9:45 PM - 26 Oct 2016

46 97

Dan
@danieltobin

Follow

Nice charity you have there. Shame if we donated to it. #MormonMafia

8:38 PM - 26 Oct 2016

179 454



Ben Winslow
@BenWinslow

Follow

Two top consiglieri in the #MormonMafia. #utpol

8:29 PM - 26 Oct 2016

230 531



Bigly Shoe
@TheOneSoleShoe

Follow

Left some spare blankets in your bed while you were sleeping. #MormonMafia

8:05 PM - 26 Oct 2016

42 127



Gary HokieHawk
@grsvt81

Follow

Used to play a lot of volleyball with people in the #MormonMafia. Just when I thought I was out, they'd pull me back in.

9:50 PM - 26 Oct 2016

9 22



Andrew Eide
@ACEide93

Follow

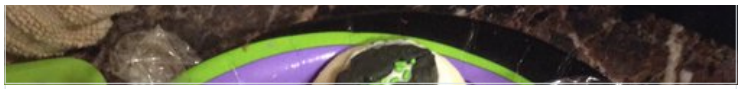
Revenge is a dish best served cold.. like jello#MormonMafia twitter.com/loudobbs/statu…

9:49 PM - 26 Oct 2016

22 75



Lou Dobbs' Rant About 'Mormon Mafia' Becomes Twitter's Best New Hashtag



Robert Trishman
@RobTmanJr

Follow

Just tonight, the #MormonMafia struck at our house. #keepyourfriendscloseandyourenemiescloser

10:03 PM - 26 Oct 2016

34 110

Zaphod Beeblebrox
@jscholes85

Follow

Say hello to my little Friend magazine #MormonMafia

9:35 PM - 26 Oct 2016

87 290



Hombre Malo Jeremy
@VitruvianMonkey

Follow

"See? It says his protection money hasn't been paid. So we're going to go pay it for him and help with some chores." #MormonMafia

9:57 PM - 26 Oct 2016

119 364

Kevin Boyd
@kevinboyd1984

Follow

The #MormonMafia apologized to me when they ran me over with their bicycle and offered me some water too

9:54 PM - 26 Oct 2016

14 30

Lou Dobbs' Rant About 'Mormon Mafia' Becomes Twitter's Best New Hashtag

Sarah
@sarahrstevenson
Follow

The #mormonmafia will shoot you and then frame your friends

.
.
.
.

Into the perfect scrapbook

9:45 PM - 26 Oct 2016

302 962

JPH #McMullinFinn
@jheidmann
Follow

That @LouDobbs exposed us. Time to pay him a visit. Maybe bring a nice bundt cake. #MormonMafia

10:18 PM - 26 Oct 2016

41 101

Stuart G Spooner
@StuartSpooner
Follow

In my experience, the #MormonMafia will graciously feed you delicious baked goods until you have a coronary. Totally sinister #conspiracy twitter.com/LouDobbs/statu…

8:34 PM - 26 Oct 2016

94 337



Carl Gustav
@CaptYonah
Follow

You don't pay on time, a #MormonMafia enforcer will make a house call.
8:37 PM - 26 Oct 2016
26 91

Lou Dobbs' Rant About 'Mormon Mafia' Becomes Twitter's Best New Hashtag



Bigly Shoe
@TheOneSoleShoe
Follow

"We're gonna send some people, we're gonna send a couple of our people, and help clear the driveway." #MormonMafia
8:40 PM - 26 Oct 2016
126 378



¡El Sooopèrr! ن
@SooperMexican
Follow

They send one of yours a Christmas card, you send one of theirs a Christmas BOUQUET!
THAT'S the Salt Lake City way!!#MormonMafia
10:14 PM - 26 Oct 2016
32 70



Ben Howe
@BenHowe
Follow

Just try to tell a member of the #MormonMafia that you're not interested in family board game night. See what happens.
8:04 PM - 26 Oct 2016
269 821



TopangaVista
@bhofmarvista
Follow

The #mormonmafia will take a sharp object from a dark car...and use it to scrape the ice off your rental vehicle.
9:59 PM - 26 Oct 2016
17 37



Lou Dobbs' Rant About 'Mormon Mafia' Becomes Twitter's Best New Hashtag



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Trump Star Vandal — Green Eggs and Slam (VIDEO)

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Lou Dobbs' Rant About 'Mormon Mafia' Becomes Twitter's Best New Hashtag

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Fears sex-crazed deer rampaging across Britain could kill dozens of humans

14:36, 14 Oct 2016 Updated 14:37, 14 Oct 2016 By Scott Campbell , Ruth Ovens

mirror.co.uk

Motorists warned about sex-crazed deer on the rampage across Britain amid fears dozens of humans could be killed



Getty

Deers are highly active between October and December

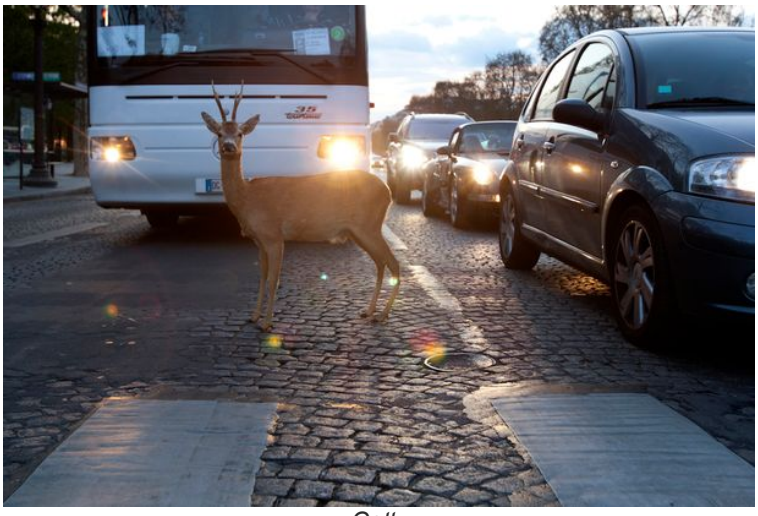
Motorists have been warned about sex-crazed deer on the rampage across Britain amid fears dozens of humans will be killed in crashes involving the animals this year.

October to December is considered a particularly high-risk period as deer will be on the move for the autumn mating season – also known as the rut.

The highest risk of a collision is between sunset and midnight as well as the hours shortly before and after sunrise.

Across the UK it is estimated that there could be up to 74,000 deer-related motor vehicle accidents this year alone, resulting in 400 to 700 human injuries and 20 deaths, reports Somerset Live .

Tony Sangwine, from Highways England, said: "Our top priority is safety – that is why we are working with the Deer Initiative to warn motorists about these particular risks.



Getty

Officials fear there could be hundreds of injuries and dozens of deaths caused by deer

"Deer are highly active at this time of the year, meaning they can suddenly appear on the road, at both dawn and dusk.

"With most deer movement coinciding with key commuting hours, we are urging drivers to be more aware so that they can complete their journeys on our roads safely and without incident."

The combined economic impact of injury accidents and car damage is likely to exceed £50 million a year.

Some 1.5million deer live wild in the UK and there are six main species.

Highways England's advice to drivers in full

- When you see deer warning signs or are travelling through a heavily wooded or forested stretch of road, check your speed and stay alert.
- If your headlights are on, use full-beams when you can, but dip them if you see deer, as they may 'freeze'.
- More deer may follow the first one you see.
- Be prepared to stop.
- Try not to suddenly swerve to avoid a deer. Hitting oncoming traffic or another obstacle could be even worse.
- If you have to stop, use your hazard warning lights.
- Do not approach an injured deer – it could be dangerous.

DailyMirror

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Inside the forgotten Mount Dora Catacombs, the nation's largest subterranean bomb shelter

orlandoweekly.com

Orlando Weekly home page.



A family at the main entrance to the Catacombs.



"This was the main door to the shelter, it's made out of 2,000 pounds of steal. When I was down there, I was imagining what it would be like if that door fell. "

A family at the main entrance to the Catacombs.

One of the biggest secrets in Central Florida is just 6 feet below an orange grove on the outskirts of Mount Dora, Florida.

In 1961, the Cuban Missile Crisis was at hand, and with the overhanging fear of an impending Soviet missile strike, school children practiced ducking under their desks, air raid sirens filled the air and families in Central Florida built homemade bomb shelters.



"The floor was completely soaked. Walking around down there, it wasn't spooky in the sense that it was haunted, it was spooky in the sense that it was like witnessing a reverse disaster."



"This is the main room. They would have cooked and eaten and congregated here. The whole place was mostly just hallways and small rooms to either side."

Inspired by the 1959 novel *Alas, Babylon*, 100 members of 25 wealthy families in Mount Dora, Florida, pooled their resources and secretly built what is said to be the largest privately-owned bomb shelter in the nation, a massive subterranean structure that is now referred to as the Mount Dora Catacombs.

From the 1991 *Orlando Sentinel* article, "A Cocoon As Big As Fear That Built It":

> *The fortress has 5,000 square feet of living space, not including storage areas. It was built to house 25 families. Each was assigned a private room large enough to accommodate four people. There was enough food and fuel to allow 100 people to live for more than half a year without ever having to poke their heads out of the ground.*
>
> *The families - including those of the town's mayor, the superintendent of schools, a local bank president, several doctors and a minister - planned to hunker down in relative comfort while a nuclear firestorm consumed those left above.*
>
> *Then, when the smoke from World War III cleared and the radiation levels fell, they planned to emerge from their cocoon and start rebuilding civilization.*
>
> *Dubbed the "Catacombs," the cavernous fallout shelter is the size of a small motel, with 1-foot-thick walls of steel and concrete.*

Buried six feet beneath an orange grove, the complex has a 40-foot-by-20-foot recreation room, a medical clinic, a kitchen, bathrooms, a sewage system and an air-conditioning and filtering system.

The families maintained their own arsenal of .357 Magnum weapons - including 10,000 rounds of ammunition - to keep out uninvited neighbors.

Obviously, the shelter was never needed and after political tensions cooled, the upkeep became unnecessary and overtly expensive. As time went on, the property changed hands multiple times, the utilities (particularly the dehumidifier) were shut off, and the Catacombs were eventually sealed shut.

In 2006, writer Bill Sievert and photographer Richard Stayton were given exclusive access to explore the Catacombs for a *Pulse Magazine* article titled "Gimme Shelter." You can read an excerpt of it here.

Stayton recently shared his experience with *Orlando Weekly.* "We were sworn to secrecy to where it was," said Stayton. "When we got there, the guy shut the door and we were alone. I was photographing in complete darkness, all I had was a flashlight."

What you see here is a gallery of Stayton's photographs and his thoughts about that particular afternoon. Stayton's captions are in quotations. Enjoy.

Orlando Weekly

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'Mr. Black Friday' is already camping out in Avondale, earlier than ever

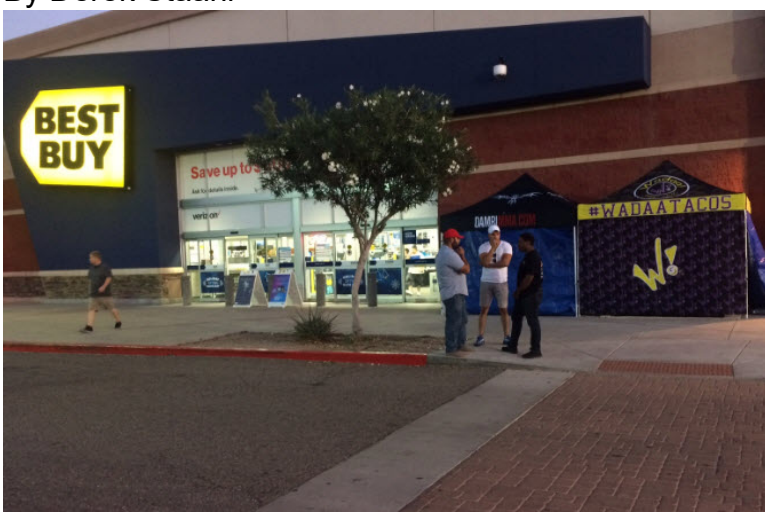
AVONDALE, AZ (KPHO/KTVK) - azfamily.com

WATCH 3TV NEWS NOW

'Mr. Black Friday' is already camping out in Avondale, earlier than ever

Posted: Nov 11, 2016 4:42 PM PST Updated: Nov 11, 2016 9:48 PM PST

By Derek Staahl



(Source: KPHO/KTVK)

Mr. Black Friday has really outdone himself this year.

Two weeks before the annual shopping bonanza, Jarvis Johnson is already camping outside his favorite Best Buy on 99th Avenue and McDowell. In fact, Johnson – who goes by Mr. Black Friday this time of year – actually set up his tent and camping gear Thursday night.

That's 336 hours before the doors open.

"It's a mental thing really, to be honest -- like can I do this? It's an uphill battle," he said.

Why go through the trouble? Well, savings aside, Johnson has a reputation to uphold. His man-cave setup drew national attention last year and caught the attention of Best Buy itself. The company paid Johnson to be in Black Friday ad that appeared this month.

Johnson, 26, has camped out for Black Friday every year since 2006. But after his big break last year, Mr. Black Friday decided to up his game – and perhaps capitalize on his newfound name recognition. Instead of just one week of camping, he's doubling it to two. And he's not going it alone – he convinced sponsors to give him gear.

Damri MMA and Wadaa Street Tacos gave him canopies for his tent (Wadaa Street Tacos will be serving free tacos here November 18). Rent-A-Center lent him couches. Fry's gave him a barbecue. Super Pawn gave him a microwave. Daniel's Total Car Care and the Wells Fargo on 23rd and Northern avenues also provided support, Johnson said.

"Even if nobody got behind me, I would still be out here because that's who I am," he said.

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Vengeful mum staged bomb hoax

stuff.co.nz

stuff Last updated 20:53, October 22 2016

A UK mum faked a bomb hoax to frame a woman she believed hadn't invited her daughter to a birthday party,

Claire Mann, 43, claimed a bomb had been planted near a synagogue, the *Mirror* reported.

Mann received three years jail for the bomb hoax and sending harassing texts to herself, in an attempt to trick police.

The dispute is believed to have escalated after Mann incorrectly thought her daughter didn't get an invite to Roz Page's eight year old's party.

Page told the *Mirror*: "Her daughter was invited. I had emailed her father but she didn't believe me."

Page said she was ostracised by other parents as a result of the dispute.

"I've lost friends over this. I lost my position as chair of the PTA at the school over this

During sentencing Judge Robert Morrison said: "This all arose when you thought your daughter was not invited to a birthday party for a school mate.

"You started a campaign against the child's mother that was spiteful and malicious.

"You bought a pay-as-you-go, unregistered phone and sent texts to yourself to support a claim you made to the police.

"You later used the same phone to send a message alleging a bomb had been placed close to hotels close to a synagogue."

The phone was traced by police to a cupboard in her home in Hendon, northwest London, and as police searched her house for it, she said "I did it, I did it. It's a prank that's gone wrong."

Mann was also sentenced to nine months for a family court matter after she and her new partner submitted documents to a custody hearing in which Mann claimed to be a qualified psychologist.

- Stuff

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A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

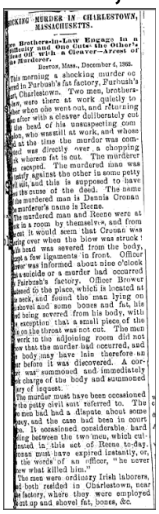
Saturday, October 1, 2016

Shocking Murder in Charlestown, Massachusetts.

(From *Jackson Citizen*, December 15, 1868)

Shocking Murder in Charlestown, Massachusetts.
Two Brothers-in-Law Engage in a Difficulty and One Cuts the Other's Head Off with a Cleaver —Arrest of the Murderer

Boston, Mass. December 4, 1868.


SHOCKING MURDER IN CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS.

Two Brothers-in-Law Engage in a Difficulty and One Cuts the Other's Head Off with a Cleaver—Arrest of the Murderer.

Boston, Mass., December 4, 1868.

This morning a shocking murder occurred in Furbush's fat factory, Furbush's Court, Charlestown. Two men, brothers-in-law, were there at work quietly together when one went out, and returning soon after with a cleaver deliberately cut the head off his unsuspecting companion, who was still at work, and whose head at the time of the murder was over a chopping block whereon fat is cut. The murderer then escaped. The murdered man was to testify against the other in some petty civil suit, and this is supposed to have been the cause of the deed. The name of the murdered man is Dennis Cronan, the murderer's name is Reene.

The murdered man and Reene were at work in a room by themselves, and from the cut it would seem that Cronan was leaning over when the blow was struck so his head was severed from the body except for a few ligaments in front. Officer Brower was informed about nine o'clock that a suicide or murder had occurred at Faribush's factory. Officer Brower hastened to the place, which is located at the neck, and found the man lying on his shovel and some bones and fat, his head being severed from his body, with the exception that a small piece of the skin on the throat was not cut. The men at work in the adjoining room did not know that the murder had occurred and the body may have lain therefore an hour before it was discovered. A coroner was summoned and immediately took charge of the body and summoned a jury of inquest.

The murder must have been occasioned by the petty civil suit referred to. The two men had a dispute about some money, and the case had been in court once. It occasioned considerable hard feeling between the two men, which culminated in the act of Reene to-day. Cronan must have expired instantly, or, in the words of the officer, “he never knew what killed him.”

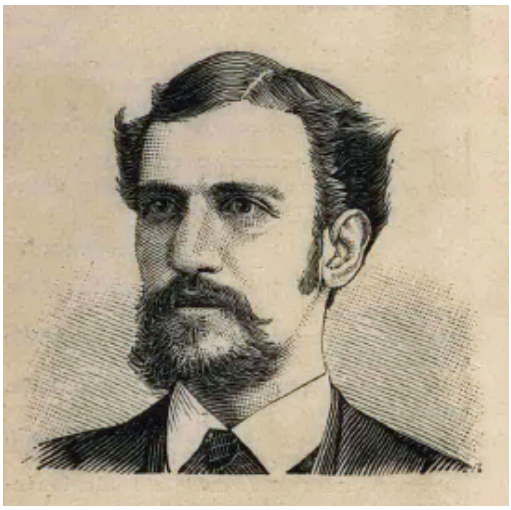
The two me were ordinary Irish laborers and both resided in Charlestown, near the factory, where they were employed to cut up and shovel fat, bones, &c.

"Shocking Murder In Charlestown, Massachusetts." *Jackson Citizen* 15 Dec 1868.

Saturday, September 24, 2016

A Maniac Murderer.

Little Murders



John Anderson

John Anderson was a Swede with a quick and rash temper. He worked in the spoke shop of the Hall & Parmelee wheel factory in Wallingford, Connecticut and in March of 1874 Anderson was having difficulties with a fellow worker named Edward Yale. Their arguments escalated rapidly and when Anderson threatened to shoot Yale he was taken seriously. The boss, Horatio Hall, fired Anderson and place another man on the machine he had been running. Edward Yale filed charges with the police and Anderson was arrested.

Out on bail and fuming with anger, Anderson entered the spoke shop on Mach 7 brandishing two loaded revolvers. He fired at Fredrick Newton who had replaced him on the machine, hitting him in the shoulder. He shot Horatio Hall in the temple, killing him instantly. Anderson then began firing indiscriminately around the shop, though he hit no one else. When both pistols were empty he ran from the shop.

Still in a fit of rage, Anderson ran to a nearby railroad depot and cut his own throat nearly from ear to ear. Though he was bleeding profusely it took four men to subdue him.

The following January, in a packed courtroom, John Anderson was tried for first degree murder. His plea of insanity was not surprising, Anderson had been called a maniac by the press from the beginning. The nature of the murder and the attempted suicide afterward were good indications that

Anderson was not mentally sound. But the jury did not agree, and after only a half hour of deliberation found him guilty of first degree murder. Anderson was sentenced to hang in April 1875. The hanging was postponed as Anderson's attorneys petitioned for a new trial. They charged that there had been errors in law regarding the admission of evidence and in the judge's instructions to the jury and claimed that they had new evidence of Anderson's insanity. At a hearing on the matter in January 1876, the court was not convinced and a new trial was denied. That April the attorneys took the petition to the Connecticut Supreme Court. The petition was so long that it took several hours to read aloud in court. The Supreme Court ruled to allow Anderson a new trial.

The trial was held in May 1878, more than four years after the crime. This time the jury deliberated for four days, and returned a verdict of guilty of second-degree murder. John Anderson was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Middletown Hospital for the Insane.

Anderson stayed in the hospital for four years, then on May 4, 1882, he escaped. He left behind a letter to one of his doctors saying that he would be out of the country in twenty-four hours. He had plenty of money and was armed to the teeth, but did not plan to hurt anyone unless he was cornered, then he would fight to the death.

The escape caused considerable excitement in Wallingford, where many believed that Anderson had been feigning insanity all along. They did not believe that he meant no one harm, and expected him to show up in Wallingford seeking revenge. Guards were placed around the houses of L. W. Hubbard who had been the prosecuting attorney in Anderson's trials; Franklin Johnson, the justice of the peace; and E. H. Ives, treasurer of the Hall & Parmelee Wheel company against whom Anderson held a special grudge. Anderson's wife kept her door bolted, she did not believe he was insane but thought his imprisonment had made his temper worse and he would be seeking revenge.

Anderson never turned up in Wallingford; apparently he was sincere in his plan to leave the country. He was at large for ten days and had gotten as far as New Jersey where he had a run-in with some strangers. He was arrested there and sent back to Connecticut.

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"A Maniac Murder." *Daily Graphic* 7 Mar 1874.
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Posted by Robert Wilhelm

Saturday, September 17, 2016

Drownings.

Drowning is a very personal method of murder, and always a case of the strong overpowering the weak.

The Manhattan Well Mystery -1799



On January 2, 1800, the body of Gulielma Sands was found in the Manhattan Well, not far from her boardinghouse on Greenwich Street, New York City. There were two contradictory schools of thought among those who knew Gulielma Sands—those who remembered her as melancholy and suicidal, and those remembered her as happy and cheerful, especially so on the night she disappeared when she revealed that she was to marry Levi Weeks. When Levi Weeks was arrested for murder everyone in the city would take a side. The trial of Levi Weeks was the first of New York City's sensational murder cases, the first American murder trial to be transcribed, and the first defense council "dream team." Levi Weeks was represented in court by Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr.

Poor 'Omie - The Murder of Naomi Wise -1807



The haunting folk ballad "Omie Wise" has kept the story of Naomi Wise's murder alive for more than two hundred years. According to legend, Naomi Wise, a poor but beautiful orphan girl, was courted by Jonathan Lewis, son of a wealthy farmer. His mother persuaded him to stop the courtship but not before Naomi became pregnant with Jonathan's child. To avoid marriage and scandal, Jonathan Lewis drowned Naomi Wise in Deep River. That is the traditional tale of Naomi Wise, but how much of it is true?

The Blue Eyed Six -1878



It was a foolproof plan. Six men in Lebanon County Pennsylvania bought insurance policies on the life of Joseph Raber, an elderly recluse living in a hut in the Blue Mountains. They were sure Raber would die soon and end their financial problems. But the premiums proved costly and the men grew tired of waiting for Raber to die. In July 1878 they decided to take matters into their own hands. Their plot was common knowledge in Lebanon County and it was not long before all six were arrested for murder. The conspirators had a number of common characteristics–all six men were illiterate, all six were living in poverty, all six were of low moral character— but one trait captured the public's imagination – all six had blue eyes.

Kissing Cousins -1885



Lillian Madison's relations with her immediate family in the 1880s were strained if not outright hostile. Her parents disapproved of her social life and kept her from the education she desired and as soon as she could, Lillian left their home in King William County, Virginia. She found comfort and support among her mother's relatives but she also began a romantic relationship with her cousin, Thomas Cluverius, that would end in her ruin. When Lillian's body, eight months pregnant, was found floating in Richmond's Old Reservoir, Cousin Thomas was the prime suspect.

Little Conestoga Creek -1888



Calvin Dellinger was a philanderer, an abusive husband, and a sadistic father, but was he a killer as well?

Posted by Robert Wilhelm read more » Links to this post

Saturday, September 10, 2016

Betrayal and Mercy.

Little Murders



Two men walking through the woods near Dalton, Georgia, came across the body of a young woman lying in Milk Creek. Her feet were bare, she was clad in old wrapper tied with twine, her chestnut-brown hair hung over her shoulders in disheveled locks, and two deep wounds cracked her skull. No one in Dalton recognized the woman; there was no way to tell where she had come from and who had killed her. Then a liveryman, Robert Springfield, made a startling discovery while taking out one of his buggies. The seat was covered with fresh clots of blood and strands of hair. He had rented the buggy the previous night, to a man named Charles Patton.

Patton was not in his room when the police called so they went inside and searched it. They found a valise covered with blood and filled with women's clothing. George Patton and his friend William Hollman were arrested for murder and reportedly they made a full confession. However, the details of the confession would change over time. The people of Dalton gathered outside the police station, bent on lynching the pair. Fearing that the "Murray County regulators" might join the mob, the police secretly moved their prisoners to a new jail in Calhoun.

The murdered girl was Matilda Gudger who had come to Dalton in the fall of 1886, from her home in Indiana, looking for the man who had seduced and abandoned her. It was first reported that she had come to find Charles Patton, but when the case came to trial, witnesses testified that she had been arguing with William Hollman and that he was the father of her unborn baby.

The men were tried separately for the murder and William Hollman's trial was held first. At the time of the murder, Matilda Gudger was staying with Patton and Hollman at a "ginhouse" in Dalton. Also living there were two sisters, Lizzie and Carrie Holcomb. At his trial, the Holcomb sisters brought damning evidence against Hollman. Lizzie Holcomb testified that on the night of the murder Hollman got out of bed and went to tend the furnace. A short time later Matilda got out of bed and said her feet were cold, and she was going to the furnace to warm them up. Lizzie said that a while later

Hollman returned and told them that ‘Tilda had fallen into the well. She further testified to the argument between Hollman and Matilda earlier in the day.

William Hollman, who had lived in Dalton all his life, maintained that he had not known Matilda Gudger until three weeks before the murder and had not killed her. The jury took Lizzie Holcomb’s word over his and Hollman was found guilty and sentenced to hang. When Charles Patton was tried, Lizzie told the same story. It was not enough for an acquittal, but Patton was spared the gallows and sentenced to life in prison.

Hollman continued to fight, taking his case to the Georgia Supreme Court. He claimed he was sentenced under perjured testimony, and if he was to be hanged, Charles Patton and Lizzie Holcomb should hang along with him. Lizzie was Patton’s sweetheart and their testimony shielded each other. The Supreme Court upheld the sentence and convinced that he would hang, Hollman stated that his confession on the gallows would not help Patton or Holcomb. He had not yet told all but planned to do so.

William Hollman’s plight radically divided the people of Dalton. Many still called for a lynching not content to wait for a legal hanging, but others took Hollman’s side. A petition asking for Hollman’s sentence to be commuted life in prison was signed by hundreds and sent to the governor. Some sent letters to directly to the governor; one Dalton woman wrote of Hollman, “the boy is scarcely a man and almost an imbecile and has been used as the tool of a wicked woman and Charles Patton, her accomplice.” Hollman himself wrote the governor a sincere letter begging for mercy, saying if that was not possible he hoped to see the governor in heaven.

Governor Gordon granted Hollman a thirty-day reprieve while he looked at the case. Following his investigation, the governor concluded that Hollman hat been convicted on the evidence of two women of bad character, and commuted his sentence to life in prison.

Again the lynch mob gathered, calling for Hollman and burning Governor Gordon in effigy. Hollman was secretly taken away to the iron mines at Rising Fawn where he would serve his sentence.

Sources:

"A Woman's Terrible Fate." *The National Police Gazette* 26 Nov 1886.
"Betrayal and Death." *Logansport Journal* 12 Nov 1886.
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"Danger of Lynching." *Evening Star* 1 Dec 1886.
"Holman's Hope." *The Atlanta Constitution* 23 Jun 1887.
"Pen Picture Of Atlanta What Is Going On In The Capital Town." *Augusta Chronicle* 10 Apr 1887.
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"Trying to Save Patton's Life." *The Atlanta Constitution* 18 May 1887.
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Posted by Robert Wilhelm

Saturday, September 3, 2016

Crime’s Worshippers.



How murder becomes a virtue and misfortune a misdeed—two suggestive tableaus which every jail in the country has seen enacted.

The depraved taste of a certain class of humanity is very well shown in the way they run after criminals. The greater the crime the greater the hero. Cases of this kind can be cited from the story of any jail or prison in the country. The brutal wife murderer finds an army of sympathizers, while the poor, betrayed young mother who, in a fit of madness, has made away with the pledge of her fall from virtue, is abandoned by her sex to her despair and her doom. Our artist has effectively pictured the contrast. The shame is that such a contrast exists to be pictured.

Reprinted from "Crime's Worshipers." *National Police Gazette* 15 Dec 1883.

Saturday, August 27, 2016

“Happy Bob.”



Robert "Happy Bob" Van Brunt

Robert Van Brunt was born in England in 1863. He barely knew his father, who was a member of the Queen’s Scots Guards. His mother died when he was ten was ten-years-old, and from then on he was raised by his grandmother. She took him to Canada in 1878, and they settled in Toronto where he began a career as a tailor.

When a religious revivalist named Hammond held a series of meetings in Toronto, Van Brunt attended and became so enthusiastically converted that he would join Hammond on stage and speak to the assembled crowds. Hammond left Toronto, Van Brunt lost his job and became so discouraged that he attempted suicide. When he the Salvation Army arrived in town he joined their ranks and was given the ironic nickname of “Happy Bob.”
Posted by Robert Wilhelm

Saturday, August 20, 2016

Murderous North Carolina.

North Carolina's greatest murders have found their way into enduring American folk songs - not always accurate but always engaging.

Poor 'Omie - The Murder of Naomi Wise -1807



The haunting folk ballad “Omie Wise” has kept the story of Naomi Wise’s murder alive for more than two hundred years. According to legend, Naomi Wise, a poor but beautiful orphan girl, was courted by Jonathan Lewis, son of a wealthy farmer. His mother persuaded him to stop the courtship but not before Naomi became pregnant with Jonathan’s child. To avoid marriage and scandal, Jonathan Lewis drowned Naomi Wise in Deep River. That is the traditional tale of Naomi Wise, but how much of it is true?

The Ballad of Frankie Silver -1831



Charlie and Frankie Silver were the ideal young married couple, so the legend goes; he was strong and handsome, she was kind and beautiful. They lived an idyllic life, with their baby daughter, in a little cabin in the woods of Burke County, North Carolina. But things changed quickly when Frankie learned that Charlie had been seeing other women. Allegedly, one night in December 1831, she methodically and brutally murdered Charlie in his sleep. That is the legend of Frankie Silver, the reality is even darker. Frankie had endured physical abuse from Charlie throughout their marriage until, on that December night, she fought back to save her own life. Frankie Silver’s subsequent execution was a tragic miscarriage of justice.

Hang Down Your Head Tom Dula -1866



The stories behind murder ballads are never as pretty as the songs. The story behind “Tom Dooley” – the 1866 murder of Laura Foster by Tom Dula in Elkville, North Carolina – is particularly ugly. Tom Dula was having an affair with Mrs. Ann Foster Melton and when her cousin Pauline Foster came to work at the Melton home, Tom Dula had her too. They had another cousin, Laura Foster, and Tom took her to bed as well. One member of this group contracted syphilis and soon they were all infected. Tom blamed Laura and threatened revenge. Laura Foster’s body was found in a shallow grave and Tom Dula had left for Tennessee. Might have gotten away, “Hadn’t been for Grayson.”

Poor Ellen Smith -1892



The morning of July 21, 1892 the body of Ellen Smith was found behind the Zinzendorf Hotel in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She had been shot through the heart. The story of Ellen Smith’s murder is a classic tale of seduction and betrayal. A beautiful but innocent young woman strays from the path of righteousness for a faithless lover who soon becomes her killer. It is the stuff of Victorian cautionary literature and mountain murder ballads.

Posted by Robert Wilhelm

Saturday, August 13, 2016

The Murder of Chong Ong.



The murderer identified.

The basement of the building on the corner of Spring and Wooster Streets in New York City, housed the Restaurant Cubana, run by a former cigarmaker named Antonio Soloa. It was very popular among the Cubans and others in the neighborhood looking for a good inexpensive meal—Soloa's specialty was ham fried with spice and garlic and served with vegetables.

On November 2, 1885, Thomas Daly, a produce vendor, entered the Restaurant Cubana to see if Soloa needed any provision and found him lying dead on the floor of the restaurant in a pool of blood. He fled from the place but went back down with Wooster Street coal dealer James Caughlin. Butchered, was how they described the body to the police. His face and the right side of his temple had been crushed, his shirt had been slashed open and his chest stabbed through his undershirt. Blood had spurted high enough to stain the ceiling. A closer examination revealed nine stabs to the chest, severing two ribs. A knife with a ten inch blade, bent and bloody, lay on the floor near the body. The coroner later discovered that one of the stabs had severed Soloa's heart.
Posted by Robert Wilhelm

Saturday, August 6, 2016

Our Current Record of Rowdyism and Murder.

`

Little Murders
(From ***New York Herald*, New York, New York,** June 19, 1873)

Four murders signalize the opening of the present week. A sad commentary, truly, on our boasted civilization! Four brutal, inexcusable, fiendish murders are added to the list of deeds of blood that disgrace our criminal calendar. The week opened with an affray between brothers-in-law in a tenement house, during which one of the parties undertook to explain matters to the other with a hatchet. On the same evening a man was fatally stabbed in a drunken affray in a liquor store. After midnight the proprietor of another drinking saloon was desperately wounded by a knife at the hand of a man to whom he refused liquor. But the saddest case of all was the murder of Mrs. Gillen, at the age of eighteen years, by her husband, a worthy representative of the corner loafer class. This last mentioned tragedy is of such an atrocious character that it calls for grave reflection. A beautiful young girl, employed at a store, forms the acquaintance of a good-looking but dissipated young



Our Current Record of Rowdyism and Murder.

man, whose principal occupation seems to have been loafing. She foolishly consents to marry this wretch, contrary to the wishes of her father, and quickly ascertaining her terrible mistake, leaves her worthless husband and takes refuge with her parents. The husband killed her for this on Sunday night.

We cannot speak too often of this frightful epoch of murder which seems to be now at its zenith in this city. It is useless to argue more on the inefficiency of the law on this subject. When murderers become the especial protégés of the Court and every obstacle is thrown before the wheels of justice we can only wait patiently until such a monstrous outrage to civilization is removed from the statute book. The last session of the State Legislature was spent in purely political schemes, and nothing was done to secure the speedy punishment of assassins. Once in the Tombs the murderer finds numerous advocates, and the plain, unvarnished story of his cowardly crime, when it is place before the jury, becomes a tangled labyrinth of sophistry and irredeemable nonsense. When the jury find him guilty convenient judges and technical errors give him another lease on life. Trial after trial may take place until the public forgets the crime, and the execution takes place when the very object for which it is intended is no longer in the memory of the people.

But in the murder of this girl-wife the pernicious element of corner loaferism comes in to prominence. There is a class of young men—we may call them boys—in this city, whose principal occupation consists of profanity, drunkenness and, occasionally, murder. Unhappily this class is very large, and is constantly increased by willing recruits. Parents are too often to blame for the existence of such wretches, as they make poor attempts to curb nascent depravity. The police willingly, or in despite of themselves, allow a gang of ruffians to fester into crime at every prominent corner. The marriage law is so lax in its provisions that any weak-minded girl may be persuaded into wedding one of these scoundrels. The natural result of such a marriage is shown by Sunday night's tragedy. The remedy for disgraceful conditions of affairs in society is plain. A criminal law, unencumbered with vexatious delays and miserable subterfuges; stern uncompromising action on the part of the police toward corner loafers, and a more rigid enforcement of the laws should protect the sacred institution of matrimony, will be found efficient checks the present avalanche of murder in this city.

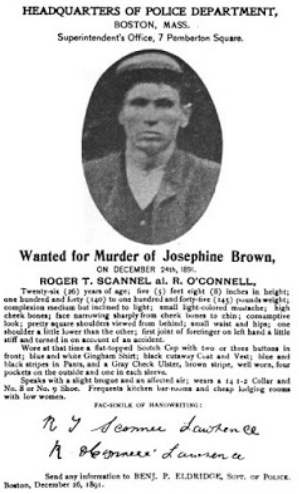
"Our Current Record of Rowdyism and Murder." *New York Herald, June 19,1873*.

Posted by Robert Wilhelm

Saturday, July 30, 2016

Two Shots, a Shriek.

"A dark, mean little bedroom, a woman, half-undressed, dirty and pale, and blear-eyed from long excesses, a male companion, leaning over her with a revolver at her head, two shots, a shriek, an ugly hole under the ear, and the vice and crime of Boston had added another murder to its long score." The *Boston Herald's* vivid description of the murder of Josephine Brown on Christmas Eve, 1891, served to underscore her sad and dismal life. Married and divorced by age twenty, Josephine's family blamed her for the failed marriage and turned her away. Left to fend for herself, Josephine Brown spent the next twenty years as a prostitute.


HEADQUARTERS OF POLICE DEPARTMENT,
BOSTON, MASS.
Superintendent's Office, 7 Pemberton Square.

Wanted for Murder of Josephine Brown,
ON DECEMBER 24th, 1890.

ROGER T. SCANNEL alias H. O'CONNELL,

Twenty-six (26) years of age; five (5) feet eight (8) inches in height; one hundred and forty (140) to one hundred and forty-five (145) pounds weight; complexion medium but inclined to light; small light-colored mustache; high cheek bones; face narrowing sharply from cheek bones to chin; consumptive look; pretty square shoulders viewed from behind; small waist and hips; one shoulder a little lower than the other; first joint of forefinger on left hand a little stiff and turned in on account of an accident.

Wore at last time a flat-topped Scotch Cap with two or three buttons in front; blue and white Gingham Shirt; black cutaway Coat and Vest; blue and black stripes in Pants, and a Gray Check Ulster, brown stripe, well worn, four pockets on the outside and one in each sleeve.

Speaks with a slight brogue and an affected air; wears a 14 1-2 Collar and No. 8 or No. 9 Shoe. Frequents kitchen bar-rooms and cheap lodging rooms with low women.

FAC-SIMILE OF HANDWRITING:

R. J. Scannell Lawrence
R. O'Connell Lawrence

Send any information to BENJ. P. ELDRIDGE, Supt. of Police.
Boston, December 26, 1891.

Joe, as she was known on the street, had been working in a brothel run by Mrs. Mary Ann Fisher on Pitt Street, in Boston's West End. The house had recently closed down with the arrest of Mrs. Fisher, and Joe was working as a street walker. The demise of Mrs. Fisher's house meant more than the loss of shelter, it left Joe without protection from the potential violence of her profession, and without anyone to keep her away from whiskey, which, when she was left on her own, became Joe's consuming passion.

Saturday, July 23, 2016

Murderous Ohio.

The Buckeye State has been the scene of some especially gruesome homicides:

The Tanyard Murder -1874



In 1874, a feud within Cincinnati's German community would lead to the brutal murder and illegal cremation of Herman Schilling, a worker at H. Frieberg's tanyard. Andreas Egner wanted revenge for catching Shilling in bed with his 15-year-old daughter. But Shilling had other enemies as well and his killer could just as easily been George Rufer who believed Shilling had cost him his job at the tannery. The murder of Herman Shilling—one of the most gruesome in Cincinnati's history—would also serve as a stepping stone for an aspiring young reporter on his way to international literary renown.


GEORGE ELIVER.

Murder among the Shantyboats -1883

Colonies of shantyboats on the Ohio River were densely populated and the boats were often the homes of unsavory characters — conditions ripe for violence and murder.

The Courthouse Riots. -1883



When William Berner was tried in 1884 for the cold-blooded murder of his boss, William Kirk, the people of Cincinnati expected a hanging. When the verdict returned was only manslaughter, the city was outraged. It was the last straw, breaching the limits of tolerance after years of political corruption, driving an angry populace into the streets for three days of violence that took fifty-four lives and left public buildings in rubble -- an uprising known as The Courthouse Riots.

The Sailor and the Spiritualist -1886

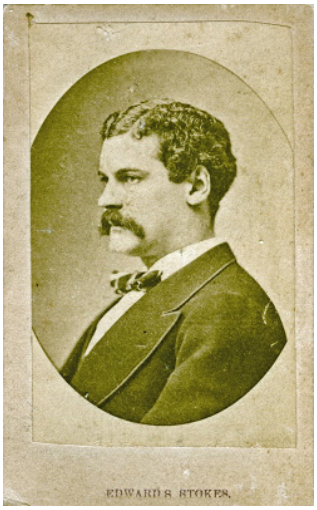

MRS. ALTHADINE SMITH.

Alfred and Althadine Fisk had been married for more than twenty years but over time their lives had grown apart. He became a Great Lakes sailor interested more in drinking and carousing than in raising a family; she became a professional clairvoyant. When Alfred's neglect turned to physical abuse and Althadine filed for divorce, she had the foresight to send the children away and bring in a friend for support and protection, but her clairvoyance

failed when she was unable to predict the tragic consequence of letting Alfred stay just one more night.

Saturday, July 16, 2016

Edward S. "Ned" Stokes.



This recently acquired *carte de visite* of playboy, Edward S. "Ned" Stokes, completes the set of principals in the 1872 murder of Jim Fisk, America's most flamboyant and best-loved robber-baron. Though hardly in the same class financially, Fisk and Stokes were great friends up until Stokes stole Fisk's mistress, Josie Mansfield, considered by some to be the most beautiful woman in the country. Not content to steal his girl, Stokes attempted to blackmail Fisk with his love letters to Josie. When that failed, Stokes sued Fisk for $200,000 in profits he felt he was owed from a business venture. This failed as well. Frustrated at losing the lawsuit, Stoke ambushed Fisk on the stairs of the Grand Central Hotel in New York City and shot him dead.





Saturday, July 9, 2016

A Tale of Deepest Crime.

(From ***Wheeling Register*, Wheeling West Virginia,** November 28, 1883)


A TALE OF DEEPEST CRIME.

The Mystery Surrounding a Murder Which Resulted in Four Other Tragedies Made Clear After Many Years.

SEYMOUR, Ind., November 27.—Yesterday there arrived in Medora, a town situated nineteen miles from this place, a woman giving her name as Eliza Kemp. She is now engaged as an agent of dress patterns. Seventeen years ago there occurred in Seymour one of the most blood curdling and mysterious murders ever committed in this part of Indiana. There were subsequently three other murders committed, caused directly by the first murder. For the past seventeen years these murders were entirely Surrounded by the Deepest Mystery, and not until the present time, when the testimony of Liza Kemp was given, was the true history of the crime known. A history of

A Tale of Deepest Crime.

The Mystery Surrounding a Murder
Which Resulted in Four Other Tragedies
Made Clear After Many Years.

Seymour, Ind., November 27—Yesterday there arrived in Medora, a town situated nineteen miles from this place, a woman giving her name as Eliza Kemp. She is now engaged as an agent of dress patterns. Seventeen years ago there occurred in Seymour one of the most blood curdling and mysterious murders ever committed in this part of Indiana. There were subsequently three other murders committed, caused directly by the first murder. For the past seventeen years these murders were entirely Surrounded by the Deepest Mystery, and not until the present time, when the testimony of Liza Kemp was given, was the true history of the crime known. A history of

the crime, briefly given, is as follows. On the night of January 3, 1866, Moore Woodmansee, a wealthy merchant of Medora, came to Seymour, on his way to Cincinnati. He had $2,000 in cash, with which he was to purchase goods. He registered at the Rader House for the night, and was assigned to room No. 7. He was missed form his room, and his disappearance was, for over nine months, a mystery, when, in October, his body was found in White River, his head was cut off, but the examination by several doctors who treated Wooodmansee during life

Gave a General Verdict

that it was the remains of Woodmansee. The Rader House was ransacked for supplemental evidence of the suspected murder. After removing the carpet in room 7, blood stains were found on the floor, and attempts of scrubbing stains from the stairway were discovered. Gordon Kinney an employee of the hotel was suspected of knowing of the murder. When the excitement caused by the finding of the body was at its highest, an unknown man called Kinney from his door one night, and as he opened the door was shot and instantly killed. Soon the unfruitful efforts to find the murderers were abandoned. Again, a man named Eben Wheeler was mortally wounded and when told he had to die, Wheeler made a confession, stating that on the night of Woodmansee's murder two men had taken from the Rader stable the horse and spring wagon.

In the Morning They Returned.

The bottom of the wagon was covered with blood. It was afterwards taken out and a new one put in instead. Rader was arrested for the murder, but acquitted, and again the affair was a dark mystery.

On the night of the murder a dance was being held in the dining rooms of the Rader House. Toward the close of the dance Sam Long and A. W. Flynn, both gamblers and hard cases, left. It was well known that Flynn and Woodmansee had had a difficulty and were engaged in a law suit. Flynn had threatened to kill him and his partner, Sam Long, said the case should never come to trial. It was also proven that they had followed him to Seymour. After the murder these men returned to Medora. Every time, during the many years, that new evidence or news concerning the Woodmansee murder was reported, it was followed by a meeting of these men

Suspicion Began to Point Strongly Towards Them.

Flynn threatened to shoot one Emery, who has talked about him but Emery shot first and instantly killed Flynn. Sam Long the partner, immediately disappeared and Alden E Rodman, a suspected accomplice was one night taken by unknown mob and hung. Thus, from knowing of the murder of Woodmansee, Gordon Kinney was murdered, Reuben Wheeler was mortally wounded, A. W. Flynn was shot and instantly killed, and A. E. Rodman was hung. Over seventeen years passed away, and the mystery of one murder had grown into the mystery of five still unsolved.

Yesterday, as before stated, Eliza Kemp arrived in Medora. The Woodmansee murder is no longer a mystery. For Eliza Kemp is no other than the Eliza Kemp who occupied Room 8, next to Woodmansee's room in the Rader House on that fateful night . She said "On that night I was

Suddenly Awakened by a Noise

in Room 7. In a second I was fully awake, and realized that some one in the next room was begging for his life. I heard "Sam, kill the d—n s— of b—" Then a blow followed by a heavy fall, and a moan or two. Then one said: "He's dead, d—n him." They then agreed to take his body, cut the head off and throw the body in the river. I left Seymour early in the morning and have not told what I have heard. I am going to Kansas in a few days, or would not now tell what I do, because my life had been threatened time and again by anonymous letters and in other ways." Five of the six supposed to have been connected with this murder have been killed and Sam Long, the only remaining left in 1866 and has never since been seen or hear of. Thus, after seventeen years of mystery the murder did will out.

He Emptied his Gun.

Little Murders



Clara Arnold, of Indianapolis, Indiana, had left her husband John and after several months of living apart sued for divorce on the grounds of ill-treatment. John Arnold countered by alleging that his wife had “evil associations” and too close a companionship with John W. Poe. Arnold had threatened his estranged wife with violence and she sent for Poe to stay with her for protection. Her sister Mollie and her husband were also staying with her on the night of December 8, 1889.

Around 10:00 that night the street door burst open and John Arnold entered brandishing a revolver. He fired two shots at John Poe, then turned to his wife shouting, “Clara, I told you I was going to kill you! I can’t stand it any longer! Get ready to die.” He fired three shots at her, one bullet hit her in the left breast and lodged near the lung, another hit her left leg near the pelvis. He then turned the gun on himself.

John Poe had been exceptionally lucky. One bullet had broken two teeth and cut his tongue, the other, deflected by his overcoat, inflicted a superficial wound under his arm. When the police found John Arnold lying on the floor they thought he had succeeded in killing himself, but he had been playing possum. He had a minor flesh wound in his arm. The wound was dressed and he was taken to jail.

Sources:

"He Emptied His Gun." *National Police Gazette* 28 Dec 1889.
"Made Mad by Jealousy." *Kansas City Times* 9 Dec 1889.
"Shot His Wife." *St. Louis Republic* 9 Dec 1889.
"Shot to Death." *Indianapolis Sun* 28 Dec 1889.

Murderous California.

In the early 1800s, California was a region filled with outlaws, drifters, and gold-seekers, with too many murders to document. By the end of the century, though, the Golden State began to see some eastern style murders.

The Woman in Black. -1870



A prominent California legislator was sitting with his wife and son on board the Oakland-San Francisco ferryboat *El Capitan* the evening of November 3, 1870. They did not notice the woman, dressed entirely in black, wearing a broad brimmed black hat with a black veil covering her face, as she approached them. From the folds of her dress the woman pulled a derringer and shot the man in the chest. The family recognized the woman in black then; it was Laura Fair and she was finally ending her tumultuous affair with Alexander P. Crittenden.

"Thus She Passed Away." -1880



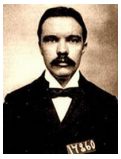
George Wheeler fell in love with his wife's younger sister Della. When she planned marry someone else he was faced with a dilemma: he could not marry her himself and he could not bear to see her wed to another. The solution he chose pleased no one.



The School-girl Murder. -1886

14-Year-old Mamie Kelly, murdered by the boy next door.

Theo Durrant - The Demon of the Belfry -1895



Theo Durrant, Superintendent of Sunday School at San Francisco's Emanuel Baptist Church, was seen entering the church with Blanche Lamont on April 3, 1895, the day she disappeared. Though several people had seen them together that day, Durant was not a suspect in her disappearance. But when Minnie Williams, another girl he had courted, was found murdered and mutilated in the church library and the corpse of Blanch Lamont was found in the bell tower, the innocent Sunday school teacher was recast as "The Demon of the Belfrey."

Saturday, June 18, 2016

A Domestic Tragedy.



Annie Schau rushed from her home in Erie, Pennsylvania, on December 18, 1886, and ran to the neighbors screaming, "I am shot and Minnie is shot dead." The neighbor ran to Annie's house and saw her father, Christian Schau, running through the backyard with a smoking revolver in hand. Inside the house, Annie's 22-year-old sister Minnie lay dead, shot through the heart. The girls' mother was wild with grief, surrounded by her other six children mourning piteously.

Saturday, June 11, 2016

Murder in a Saloon.

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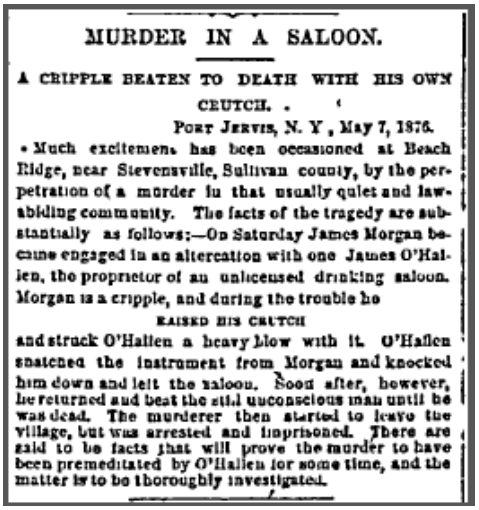
Little Murders
(From***New York Herald,*** **New York, New York,** May 8, 1876)

Murder in a Saloon.
A Cripple Beaten to Death with his Own Crutch.

Port Jervis, N. Y., May 7 1876.

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Much excitement has been occasioned at Beach Ridge, near Stevensville, Sullivan County, by the perpetration of a murder in that usually quiet and law abiding community. The facts of the tragedy ae substantially as follows:--On Saturday James Morgan became engaged in an altercation with one James O'Hallen, the proprietor of an unlicensed drinking saloon. Morgan is a cripple, and during the



MURDER IN A SALOON.

A CRIPPLE BEATEN TO DEATH WITH HIS OWN CRUTCH.

PORT JERVIS, N. Y., May 7, 1876.

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RAISED HIS CRUTCH

and struck O'Hallen a heavy blow with it. O'Hallen snatched the instrument from Morgan and knocked him down and left the saloon. Soon after, however, he returned and beat the still unconscious man until he was dead. The murderer then started to leave the village, but was arrested and imprisoned. There are said to be facts that will prove the murder to have been premeditated by O'Hallen for some time, and the matter is to be thoroughly investigated.

"Murder in a Saloon." *New York Herald,* 8 May 1876.

Saturday, June 4, 2016

Chicago Tragedy.

Little Murders



Oscar Grundman and his wife Annie were living unhappily in a Chicago tenement in 1891. Annie's excessive drinking had been a continual source of trouble for her husband. He complained that she spent all of his hard-earned wages and neglected her domestic duties; he was running out of patience.

That September Oscar Grundman had Annie arrested and wanted to have her sent to the Washingtonian Home, an institution for the treatment of alcoholism. The judge dismissed her case, however, and sent her back home. After that, Annie lived in fear of her husband and locked him out of the house.

On September 15, Oscar persuaded a neighbor boy to knock on Annie's door and tell her the police wanted to see her. When she came to the door he struck her on the head with a hatchet. Oscar ran away, escaping arrest, leaving Annie with a serious scalp wound. At the hospital, she was told that her thick hair had probably saved her life.

A week later, Oscar called on Annie again. This time, believing he had come to reconcile, she let him in. “Annie,” he said to her, loud enough for the other tenants to hear, “I have determined that we must part. We can’t live together happily. I have put our children in good hands. Now we must say goodbye.

Annie protested, pleading with him not to leave her. But leaving her was not what Oscar had in mind. The neighbors heard him say, “It’s no use Annie, we must die. Don’t scream. It will soon be over, Annie, and we will be happier than now.”

Oscar pulled out his revolver then and shot Annie once in the head, then turning the pistol on himself, fired a second shot. The neighbors heard the gunshots and heard two bodies fall to the ground. They forced their way into the room and found the unhappy couple lying dead, their blood mingling in pools around their bodies.

Sources:

"Chicago Tragedy." *Elkhart Daily Review* 23 Sep 1891.
"Double Tragedy in Chicago." *National Police Gazette* 17 Oct 1891.
"Murder and Suicide." *Daily Inter Ocean* 23 Sep 1891.
"Struck with a Hatchet." *Daily Inter Ocean* 16 Sep 1891.

Murderous New Hampshire.

"Live Free or Die" is the motto of the great state of New Hampshire. Everyone has their own interpretation of those words, here are a few of the worst:

The Northwood Murderer. -1852



When a drifter came to town and committed murder, he was likely to get away without capture and was prone to kill again. But every now and then a wandering killer was caught and his whole bloody itinerary made public. Such was the case of the Northwood Murderer.

The Smuttynose Murders -1873



Life on Smuttynose Island, in the Isles of Shoales,off the coast of New Hampshire, was hard in the 1870's. The winter months were bitter cold and the winter storms were devastating. Maren Hontvet, her sister Karen Christensen, and their sister-in-law Anethe Christensen dreaded the loneliness and isolation of the island when the men of the house were away fishing. The night of March 6, 1873, with the men away, the women were prepared to be alone in the cold house, but nothing could have prepared them for the arrival, by rowboat, of a deranged axe murderer.

Josie Langmaid-"The Murdered Maiden Student" -1875



On October 4, 1875, 17-year-old Josie Langmaid was absent from school – The Pembroke Academy in Pembroke, New Hampshire. When her parents learned that Josie never arrived at school, they organized a search party. At 9:00 that night they found the mutilated body of Josie Langmaid in the woods near the academy. The following morning they found her head, half a mile from where the body had been. The gruesome discovery tore the community of Pembroke apart.

The New Hampshire Horror. -1883



After his wife left him in November, 1883, Thomas Samon began a weekend of drunken debauchery in Laconia, New Hampshire, with Jane Ford, the wife of his landlord. But when the beer ran out Saturday morning, events turned unexpectedly violent, ending in a horrible triple murder.

Cain and Abel. -1890



Like the Biblical brothers Cain and Able, the Sawtell brothers of Boston took divergent paths through life. While Hiram settled down and raised a family, supported by his successful fruit business, Isaac was doing time in Charlestown prison. And as with the Bible's first murderer, Isaac's jealousy of his brother became unbearable. Upon his release from prison, he lured Hiram from his family and killed him in cold blood.

Murder in the Vale of Tempe -1891



George Abbott was a young child when he began his career as a thief and by his thirtieth birthday he had spent a third of his life in jail. When he left prison he changed his name and tried to change his evil ways, traveling and taking honest employment. While working as a farmhand in Hanover, New Hampshire he fell in love with the farmer's daughter, Christie Warden. When Christie did not return his love Abbot went back to his old ways and took it at gunpoint in the shady hollow known as the Vale of Tempe.

A Contract With the Devil -1897

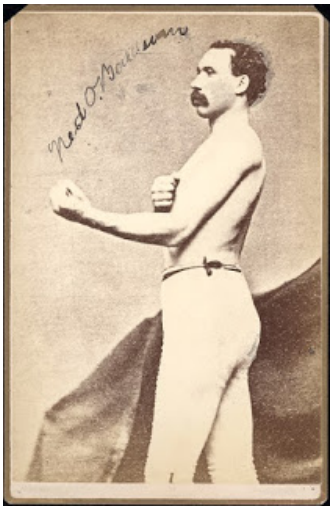


On April 16, 1897, cashier Joseph A. Stickney was murdered during a daring daylight robbery of the Great Falls National Bank in Somersworth, New Hampshire. The frenzied investigation that followed, crossed state and national borders resulting in the arrests of Joseph Kelley, a resident of Somersworth with peculiar habits. Joseph E. Kelley confessed to the murder, leaving the court to decide whether his actions were driven by a mental disorder, whether he was feigning mental disability, or whether Kelley had in fact made a contract with the devil.

Saturday, May 21, 2016

"The Irish Giant"

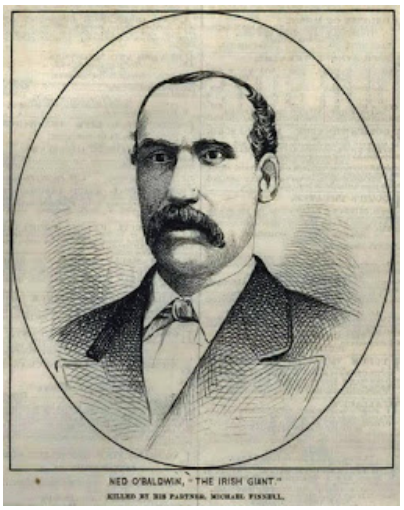
Ned O'Baldwin was a heavyweight contender in the bareknuckle era of the 1860s and 1870s when a bout would continue until one man was knocked unconscious or the police arrived to shut the whole show down. Aptly dubbed "The Irish Giant," O'Baldwin was 6' 5", weighed 200 lbs., and hailed from Lismore, Ireland. O'Baldwin is considered by some to be the greatest heavyweight boxer prior to John L. Sullivan, but outside the ring he was known for a violent temper which often



landed him in court. He was once jailed for armed robbery after threatening to bludgeon a stakeholder.

Even for a championship contender, prizefighting as a source of income was less than reliable, so O'Baldwin partnered with a man named Michael Finnell to open a liquor store and saloon at 45 West Street in New York City. Apparently, the liquor business was not reliable either and on September 27, 1875, the partners met in the store for a vigorous business discussion. Only two men were present so it impossible to know exactly what transpired, but it was alleged that O'Baldwin was ready to sell out and leave the business and Finnell was not agreeable to this plan. The argument escalated, turned violent, and two shots were fired, attracting attention to the store.

Those who came to see what had happened found the Irish Giant on the floor, bleeding to death with a gunshot wound to the abdomen and another to the chest. The shooter was nowhere to be found. They quickly carried O'Baldwin to the hospital where he died the following day.



Those in the sporting community greatly mourned the big man's death, but the New York press was not shedding any tears. Some editorials implied that Finnell's action may have actually benefitted the community. The *New York Herald* was appalled by this advocacy of vigilante justice and, without wasting any sympathy on the dead boxer, wrote:

All large cities abound with people whose death might, in one point of view, be deemed a public benefit. If the haunts of thieves and burglars, or the streets or parts of streets given to lewd uses which make them the peril and often the ruin of young men, were blasted by lightning or engulfed by an earthquake, the moral atmosphere would, no doubt, be purified, but it by no means follows that the destruction of the vicious classes by human agency would be for the public advantage.

When the news of O'Baldwin's death reached Finnell, he realized he either had to leave the city or turn himself in. He contacted a lawyer, and went to the police station claiming that he had acted in self-defense—not a bad plea given O'Baldwin's size and reputed temper. Michael Finnell was tried for first-degree murder the following February and was found not guilty for the murder of the Irish Giant.

Sources:
"Equal Justice to the High and the Low." New York Herald 2 Oct 1875.
Boxing Forum 24: Ned O'Baldwin, the Irish Giant.
"Ned O'Baldwin's Murderer "Not Guilty"." Daily Critic 19 Feb 1876.
"New York." Boston Journal 28 Sep 1875.
Jo Sports: O'BALDWIN, NED CABINET CARD ("THE IRISH GIANT").
"The Slayer of O'Baldwin." New York Herald 1 Oct 1875.

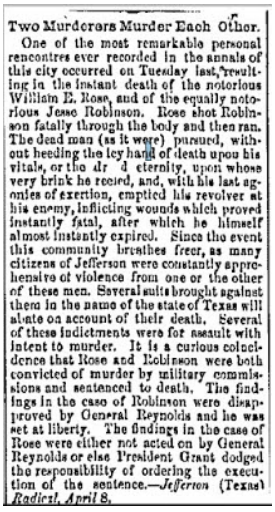
Saturday, May 14, 2016

Two Murderers Murder Each Other.

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Little Murders
(From ***Trenton State Gazette*, Trenton, New Jersey,** May 2, 1871)

Two Murderers Murder Each Other.


Two Murderers Murder Each Other.

One of the most remarkable personal rencontres ever recorded in the annals of this city occurred on Tuesday last, resulting in the instant death of the notorious William E. Rose, and of the equally notorious Jesse Robinson. Rose shot Robinson fatally through the body and then ran. The dead man (as it were) pursued, without heeding the icy hand of death upon his vitals, or the dr d eternity, upon whose very brink he reeled, and, with his last agonies of exertion, emptied his revolver at his enemy, inflicting wounds which proved instantly fatal, after which he himself almost instantly expired. Since the event this community breathes freer, as many citizens of Jefferson were constantly apprehensive of violence from one or the other of these men. Several suits brought against them in the name of the state of Texas will abate on account of their death. Several of these indictments were for assault with intent to murder. It is a curious coincidence that Rose and Robinson were both convicted of murder by military commissions and sentenced to death. The findings in the case of Robinson were disapproved by General Reynolds and he was set at liberty. The findings in the case of Rose were either not acted on by General Reynolds or else President Grant dodged the responsibility of ordering the execution of the sentence.—*Jefferson* (Texas) *Radical*, April 8.

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"Two Murderers Murder Each Other." *Trenton State Gazette,* 2 May 1871.

Saturday, May 7, 2016

Stranglers.

Strangulation is the most intimate form of murder, the killer takes the life of his victim with his bare hands. Perhaps this is why it is used so often to dispatch loved ones and family members.

Here, in chronological order, is the **Murder by Gaslight** strangers hall of fame:

The Minister and the Mill Girl. - 1831
Sarah Cornell was found hanging in a barn in Tiverton, Rhode Island. Was it murder or suicide?
Cup of Affliction. - 1847
Mary Runkle's “cup of affliction,” was filled with tragic deaths of four family members and the suspicion that she was responsible.

An Unfortunate Organization. - 1845
A phrenologist determined that Reuben Dunbar had “an unfortunate organization” in which his moral faculties were not sufficiently large to balance his animal propensities. The diagnosis may have

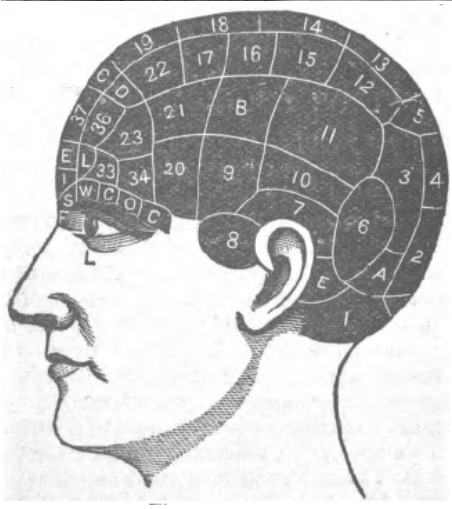




been influence by the fact that Dunbar had been convicted of strangling his two young stepbrothers.

The Bond Street Tragedy. - 1857

After Dr. Harvey Burdell was found in his office strangled and stabbed fifteen times, 31 Bond Street was shown for what it was —a hotbed of greed, lust, intrigue and depravity.







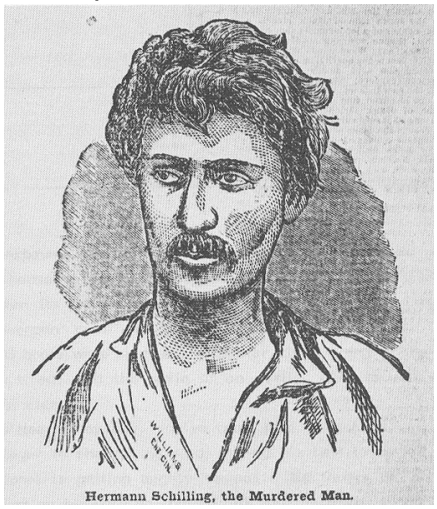
Little Mary Mohrman. - 1868

"Little Mary Mohrman," as she was known by all, was described as "one of those sunny-haired, bright-eyed, sylvan-like children, whose innocence, one would think, could soften the hardest soul." This sentiment would be tested and proven horribly false.



The Northwood Murderer. - 1872

When a drifter came to town and committed murder, he was likely to get away without capture and was prone to kill again. But every now and then a wandering killer was caught and his whole bloody itinerary made public. Such was the case of the Northwood Murderer.



The Tanyard Murder. - 1874

A feud within Cincinnati's German community would lead to the brutal murder and illegal cremation of Herman Schilling.

The Hart-Meservey Murder. - 1877

Sarah Meservey was strangled to death in her home in Tenant's Harbor, Maine. Was Nathan Hart falsely accused?

"Thus She Passed Away." - 1880

When George Wheeler's mistress planned marry someone else he was faced with a dilemma: he could not marry her himself and he could not bear to see her wed to



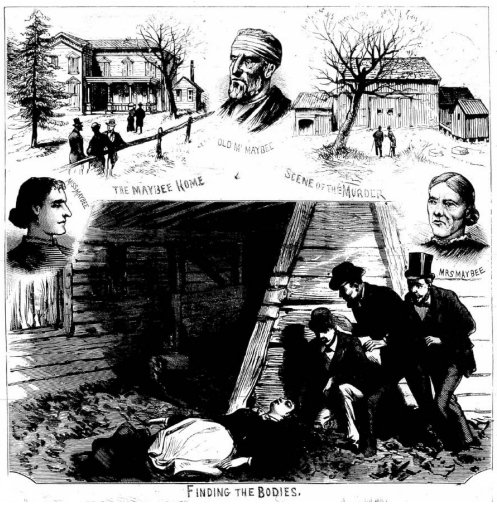


another. The solution he chose pleased no one.

"She Died in Defense of Her Honor." - 1886

A web of circumstantial evidence around James Titus as the man who raped and murdered Tillie Smith. The public story soon became the official story, but there is a good possibility that none of it was true.





The Long Island Murders. - 1883

A series of violent home invasions on Long Island in 1883 left two people dead and four more seriously injured. The community was thrown into a state of confusion with at least a dozen false arrests, two perjured eye-witnesses, a false confession, lynch mobs, a jail break, and for a time, two independent and equally valid lines of inquiry that could not be reconciled.

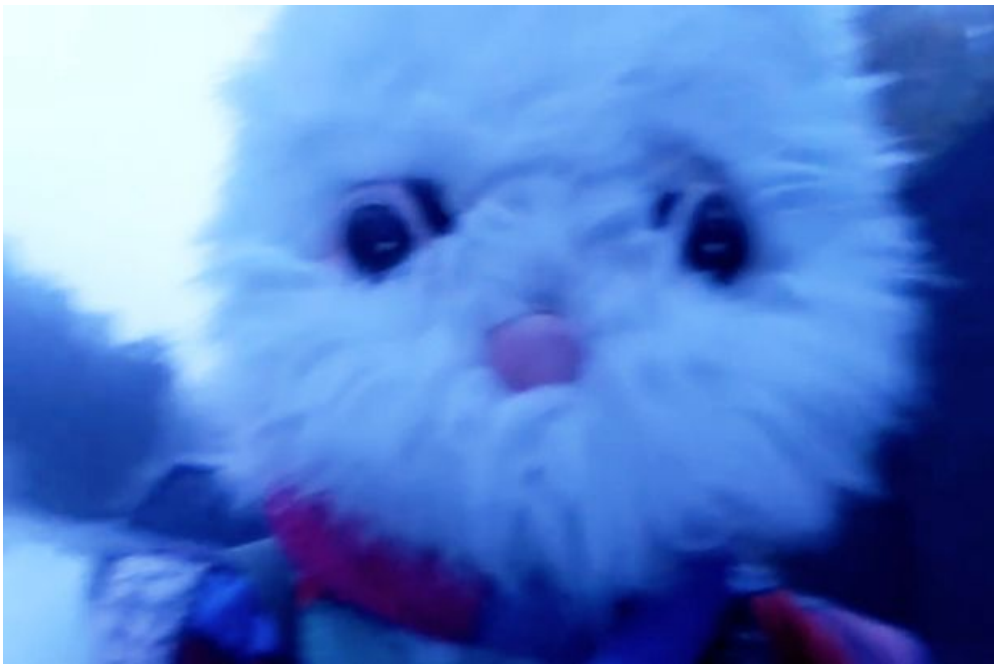
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/ Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */ .en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; } .en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

Mysterious six-foot rabbit man keeps turning up on bridge

16:33, 2 NOV 2016 | **UPDATED** 16:37, 2 NOV 2016 | **BY** JOSHUA BARRIE

Sometimes the white rabbit waves a glittery heart at passers-by in West London



People have been baffled by the strange rabbit man

"Anyone see the **white rabbit waving** a cut out glittery heart at 8am in Barnes Bridge yesterday?" **Lucy Jane Santos** asked on Twitter.

"Or was I just really hungover?"

Lucy may well have been hungover, but she wasn't mistaken. A **big white rabbit** was indeed waving a cut-out heart during her morning commute.

She's **not the only one** to have seen the peculiar spectacle. Hundreds of others have too.

Recommended In Weird News



NUDITY

Mystery woman stuns motorists as she drives along motorway TOPLESS while dancing around to music



SKINCARE

Dr Pimple Popper squeezes horrendous 'meatball cyst' from man's arm



WEIRD BODIES

Model with 'biggest bum in Africa' and curves like Kim Kardashian earns army of fans with saucy videos



PARENTING

Facebook, Anus and Lucifer - are these the world's 9 most ridiculous BANNED baby names?



NEW FIVE POUND NOTE

There's another rare £5 note type selling for thousands of pounds



FUNNY HA HA VIRAL

Student pens note asking loud sex neighbours to quieten down – things get weird



Sarah travers
@SarickwoodSarah

Follow

@barnes what on earth was this white rabbit doing at 8am this morning on the terrace? #mysterybarneswhiterabbit

1:10 PM - 1 Nov 2016

2 3

It's because a mysterious six-foot man dresses up as the fluffy animal on the first day of each month and sits by the River Thames waving at passing cars.

The bunny dances around in Barnes, South West London, and has been doing his quirky routine for quite some time.

READ MORE

- **Cartoon of grinning girl dismembering rabbit with a knife banned by police from tattoo shop window**

Journalist Elizabeth Ammon spotted him on Tuesday in the early morning mist. The character was sporting a colourful waistcoat and scarf.

Have your say in the comments below



Elizabeth Ammon
@legsidelizzy

Follow

On the first of every month there's a bloke who dresses as a white rabbit and stands by the river in Barnes waving at people.

1:49 AM - 1 Nov 2016

993 1,489



GREGGS

Greggs has an exclusive WhatsApp group for VIP fans – here's how to get in



BABIES

Baby grows impressive golden mane of hair at just nine weeks old - and it looks like Boris Johnson



SEX ROBOTS

Sex robots with fully functional genitalia to arrive next year and will cost up to £12,000



WEIRD BODIES

Eye-watering footage shows extreme bungee jumper leaping off bridge with hooks attached UNDER her skin

Most Read In News



1 US ELECTION

US election 2016 poll tracker: Is Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton winning the race for the White House?

CRIME

Residents say that the white rabbit is a creation of a local performance artist called Spike. He's allegedly been doing it since November 2015.

It's apparently all to give morning folk a little lift – an amusing tickle as they trundle onto work. Not everyone thinks so, with some commenting that the outfit is a little "sinister".



Anna Derbyshire
@AnnaDerbyshire
Follow

@legsidelizzy
4:05 AM - 1 Nov 2016
8 9

Judging by the white rabbit's **Facebook** page, it seems that the act is supposed to be a positive one.

"Happy first of the month," the man-animal posted on Wednesday.

"Some nice interactions this morning, one woman came up and wanted a photograph as no one believed her last month when she saw me, and a gent with his dog, got me to hold his dog so he could have a photo, lots of hooting from passing traffic, buses slowing down to have a toot, and lots of waving and happy people, what a great way to greet the month ahead."

2 Woman bled to death after sex with lover who 'drank potion to increase size of manhood'

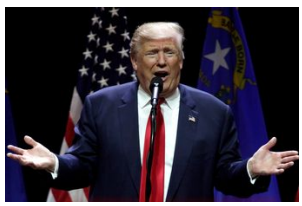
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White rabbit 1st of November 2016
Posted by **I AM White Rabbit**
835 Views

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Mystery as houseboat from Canada washes up on Irish beach with cryptic note

By Richard Wheatstone Paddy Clancy 09:15, 16 NOV 2016 Updated 09:35, 16 NOV 2016 News mirror.co.uk

The solar-panelled vessel washed ashore at Belmullet, Co Mayo after travelling around 2,000 miles from Canada

A mysterious houseboat has washed up on the beach of a tiny Irish village having somehow crossed the Atlantic in one piece.

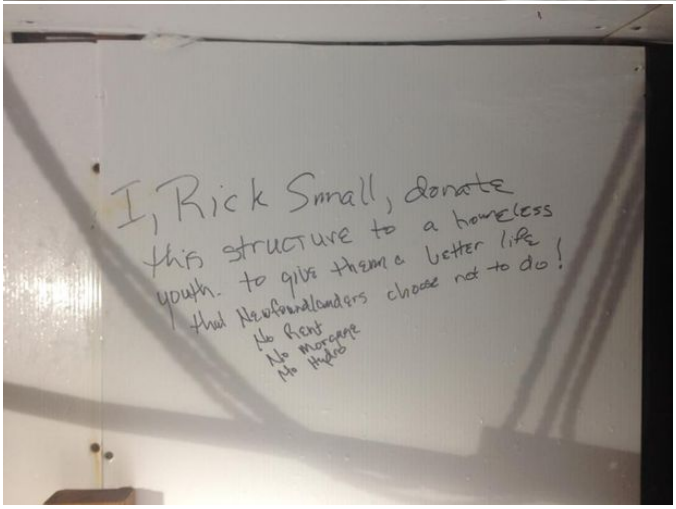
The solar-panelled vessel washed ashore at Belmullet, Co Mayo after travelling around 2,000 miles from Canada.

A message pinned to the inside of the boat - claiming to have been written by its builder Rick Small from Thunder Bay, Ontario - said it was intended to be a gift to a homeless person in Canada.

Locals in the village on Ireland's west coast were startled by the unusual sighting which sparked an emergency rescue mission by lifeboat and coast guard crews.

The letter discovered inside read: “I, Rick Small, donate this structure to a homeless youth to give them a better life that Newfoundlanders choose not to do! No rent, no mortgage, no hydro”.





The Irish Mirror reports Small built the houseboat with lumber in Conception Bay, Newfoundland, last year.

He stuffed it with insulation foam for flotation then sealed the seams with tar and installed solar panels which power a small electric motor.

He only sailed it as far as Portugal Cove, a rural seaside community in Newfoundland, where he eventually abandoned it.

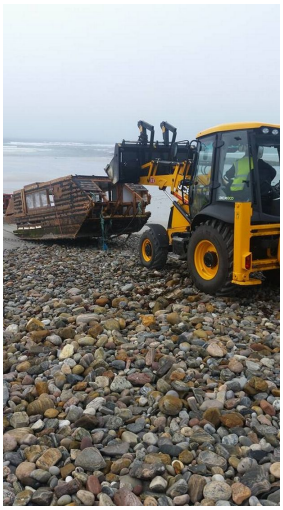
It’s a mystery how it travelled several thousand kilometres across the Atlantic to Mayo,The Irish Coast Guard have been in contact with their Canadian counterparts in Halifax.

A spokesman said: "They said the owner was hoping to cross the Atlantic in it, but they managed to discourage him.

"It was last seen in Portugal Cove in Newfoundland during the summer and it broke loose.

"The Halifax authorities were amazed it made it to Ireland and was in one piece."





Michael Hurst, of the Ballyglass Coast Guard Unit in Co Mayo, was one of the first at the scene when the vessel washed ashore.

"I didn't know what to think, I was just concerned about safety and securing it.



"Then I thought: where in the name of God did this come from and who built it?"

Locals are already talking about restoring it for use as an attraction on the Wild Atlantic Way tourist route.

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Has mystery of Flannan Isles finally been solved? - Sunday Post

sundaypost.com

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SUNDAY POST

Written by Reporter, 10/10/2015



IT'S a mystery that's captured the imaginations of conspiracy theorists for more than a century.

Just four days before Christmas 1900 three lighthouse keepers seemingly vanished into thin air on the remote Flannan Isles.

Not a single shred of evidence was ever found to point to what might have happened and theories over the years claim the men were killed by pirates, eaten by seabirds and even kidnapped by aliens.

Now the author of a new book has finally shone a light on their Marie Celeste-style disappearance.

Leading naturalist John Love, who has extensively researched the tragedy 20 miles off the tip of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, claims two of the keepers had been previously fined for not storing gear properly in a prior storm and that must have been in the back of their minds.

Instead of staying out of the fierce gale, they ventured out to make sure their equipment was safe only to be hit by a huge wave.

As part of his book, A Natural History Of Lighthouses, Mr Love managed to piece together a complete assessment of the mystery, based on all the available records, to explain what happened to James Ducat, Thomas Marshall and Donald MacArthur.

However the expert has rubbished claims a "toppled chair" and a number of unfinished meals were found by rescuers on Boxing Day 1900.

Mr Love said: "It was only after 1912, when English poet Wilfrid Wilson Gibson published his epic, Flannan Isle, that the story began to assume such an air of mystery, speculation, even intrigue.

"For me and many others including lighthouse keepers themselves, there is no mystery and never has been.

"There is no need to invoke the sinister or the paranormal, it was purely a tragic act of nature the men got swept away by abnormally rough seas."

Flannan Isles Lighthouse (John Love)

His research has revealed Thomas Marshall had previously been branded negligent and fined five shillings after equipment was washed away during a fierce gale.

With this hefty fine at the back of the men's minds, Mr Love believes they may have ventured out to make sure everything was secured, sealing their fate.

"Since it was not permitted for all three to abandon the lighthouse, only two of the men must have gone down to the landing to secure the gear. The third, Donald MacArthur, would have remained back in the lighthouse. But when his companions did not return he would have been concerned for their safety. Or else, perhaps, he saw a great wave approach and rushed to warn them.

"MacArthur may have been too late, only then to be swept away himself."

He says the keepers the first at the newly built lighthouse may not yet have been totally familiar with winter storm conditions around the island.

Mr Love said that during construction there was further tragedy the clerk of works died from natural causes, and a horse called Billy slung ashore by crane also died. "Sadly when Billy the horse came to be taken off, he struggled out of his sling and fell to his death into the sea below," he said.

A Natural History Of Lighthouses by John A. Love. Price £30 from Whittles Publishing.

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Mystery solved of hundreds of Chinese tourists flocking to quiet English village

13:13, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 15:10, 1 Nov 2016 By Laura Elvin

mirror.co.uk

Mystery solved of why hundreds of Chinese tourists are flocking to quiet English village



SWNS

Chinese and Japanese tourists have been spotted in Kidlington

The mystery of why coach loads of Chinese tourists are descending on a quaint English village has been solved - they are searching for a "true sense" of the UK.

Hordes of holidaymakers began arriving in Kidlington on tour buses in June with groups of 40 at a time spotted taking photos of houses and gardens.

Tourists have even knocked on doors and asked for selfies with locals who have no idea why their Oxfordshire idyll is suddenly a draw for international attention.

It was speculated tourists had been falsely told by rogue tour operators the village is the setting for Inspector Morse, Midsomer Murders or even Harry Potter.

But a Chinese guide responding to a BBC questionnaire handed out by a resident said throngs of tourists are visiting in search of a part of "true" England.



SWNS

The Oxfordshire village is baffled by the sudden visitor influx
They are apparently looking for true England

The response to the quiz sheet question said: "Because we don't have [these] in China.

"Here, we are looking for the true sense of this country.

"[I] like it because the environment makes you feel you are closer to the simplicity of your original self.

"[I] like the houses and gardens."

The guide was responding to a BBC question sheet that was handed to tourists by resident Anne Clifton last month.

A question sheet was handed to tourists by residents trying to get to the bottom of the visitor mystery

Anne said: "I asked a woman standing at the door of the coach if she would be good enough to complete the form.

"She was not actually one of the tourists, but was leading the party."

The tourists were a short walk from thatched cottages and a church but apparently preferred to take photos outside modern houses and cars.

Kidlington is reportedly being marketed as an idyllic English village by tourist agencies



SWNS



TONY BENNELL / SWNS.com



SWNS

Baz Daniels, who has lived in Kidlington for more than 20 years, said he had been in touch with a friend in China to try to get to the bottom of the tourist influx.

He said: "Kidlington is apparently being marketed by Chinese tourist agencies as a beautiful English village on the way to Bicester Village shopping centre.

"Many of the visitors live in cities and love to see things like the hanging baskets and little flowers in people's gardens."

Kidlington is one of the UK's largest villages, with a population of over 15,000.

One of the roads popular with tourists, Benmead Road, is a typical seventies housing estate and is nothing like a quaint English village, locals said.

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Man 'tells woman's fortune' by cupping her BREAST in baffling video

09:52, 25 Sep 2016 Updated 11:28, 25 Sep 2016 By Jonathan Sharman

mirror.co.uk



Chinese 'shamen' predicts future by touching woman's breasts

Humans have invented some pretty wacky ways of predicting the future over the centuries, but this man might just have found the strangest.

This brief video, apparently posted from China, is said to show an elderly man trying to tell a woman's fortune by cupping her breast as she looks on, baffled.

The short clip was posted to video-sharing site Miaopai and shows the man, holding a pair of crutches in his other hand, sitting impassively as he puts his hand inside the woman's top.

He appears unmoved by what he sees in the woman's future, as she rests her chin on her hand and even looks bored.



Chinese man predicts future by touching woman's breasts

This man has found a novel way of predicting the future

Bystanders also seem bemused by the spectacle, captured by a user called Xiao Yuwen and which has garnered hundreds of thousands of views.

His subject seems both confused and bored by the technique

The post prompted sceptical responses from commenters. One suggested it might be "hard to find customers" and another said: "It's just really kinky!"



Chinese man predicts future by touching woman's breasts

Branches of divination in China that have found a more mainstream degree of acceptance include palm reading, face reading and astrology .

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Mystical Chinese monkey predicts Donald Trump will be the next US president

shanghaiist.com

by Alex Linder in News on Nov 7, 2016 8:10 pm





While most economists, retired generals, newspapers, former presidents and American voters don't think that Donald Trump should be president, at least he has the backing of China's magical monkey king.

Last Thursday, Geda, aka the "king of prophets," chose Trump as the winner of Tuesday's election by rejecting the banana nearest Hillary Clinton and instead choosing the one on Trump's podium, sealing the deal by giving the Donald's life-sized cutout a big smooch on the lips, AFP reports.

The prophetic primate from Shiyan Lake Ecological Tourism Park in Hunan has a documented history of his banana-eating predictions coming true. In July, he picked Portugal to win the 2016 European football championships in the very same way.

While Trump has an infamous love-hate relationship with the polls -- believing that they are rigged when he is losing and not rigged when he is not -- it's unclear how he feels about being Geda's chosen candidate.

Trump doesn't only have the support of mystical Chinese monkeys, but Chinese toilet paper and mask manufacturers as well. While scientific polls of Chinese people and Chinese Americans aren't going his way, veteran China watchers believe that the top leadership in Beijing is rooting for the Republican presidential candidate.

“It was Mao Zedong who said: ‘Without destruction there can be no construction’. And, if I interpret him correctly, Donald Trump is the suicide bomber of American politics,” Orville Schell, the head of the Center on US-China Relations at New York’s Asia Society, told The Guardian.

“He wants to just bring the whole house down and start over. And I think there is an element [of that] that is quite tantalizing to China.”

Still, Beijing shouldn't get too greedy, this tumultuous election has already been a godsend for Chinese propaganda, allowing state news media to freely attack both candidates and trash the American political system in general.

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The Myth of the Ourang Medan Ghost Ship, 1940 - The Skittish Library

skittishlibrary.co.uk



The Skittish Library

by Estelle · December 29, 2015

The story of the ghost ship the *Ourang Medan* has never been as famous as that of the Marie Celeste, despite being more gruesome in its details. The entire crew, ship's dog included, were found dead with their mouths open and their eyes staring, and yet there was no sign of what had been responsible for their deaths, bar some desperate SOS messages sent during the tragedy. It's a mystery in more ways than one – not only has much time been spent trying to unpick what might have happened on board via many, ever-more fanciful, theories, but there's a large school of thought that says the story is actually pure fiction.

Nothing's been conclusively proved either way, except….I think I've found some evidence that will change this story for good. As far as I'm concerned, I think my new information proves that it's merely a modern fabrication, an urban legend, or whatever the nautical equivalent of that would be.

There are a lot of interesting blogs detailing what is known of the story or, rather, what is *not* known. There's Seeks Ghosts, and M. B. Forde's site too. There's a lot of differing details and speculation, so I'm going to tell the story as it appears on Wikipedia.

The story first appeared in the Dutch-Indonesian newspaper, *The Locomotive*, or *De locomotief: Samarangsch handels- en advertentie-blad* in instalments between 3-28 February 1948 and is, in brief, this.

At some point around June 1947, a SOS message in Morse code was sent by the Dutch freighter ship, the *Ourang Medan*. The ship was in distress in a position 400 nautical miles south-east of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean, and the messages were both cryptic and chilling. As received by the US ships the *City of Baltimore* and the *Silver Star*, the first message said "*S.O.S. from Ourang Medan * * * we float. All officers including the Captain, dead in chartroom and on the bridge. Probably whole of crew dead * * *."* Some morse gibberish followed, and then the second, and final, message sent by a doomed radio operator was received. It simply said "*I die*."

The *Silver Star* located the *Ourang Medan* and its crew boarded the ship, which appeared to have suffered no damage. They found the crew were dead to a man, and all the corpses lay on their backs in the aforementioned manner – eyes staring, mouth open as if screaming, looking as if they were "horrible caricatures" of themselves. The crew of the *Silver Star* found nothing that explained the situation and planned to hook up the ship to tow it into the nearest port. But before they could do this, a fire broke out in one of the cargo holds and the would-be rescuers evacuated back to their own ship. Shortly afterwards, they saw the *Ourang Medan* explode and sink into the water, never to be seen again.

Other, later, versions of the story conclude that the date was actually February 1948, and the position of the ghost ship was instead in the Straits of Malacca, in Indonesian waters. The tale had apparently originated from a surviving German crew member of the *Ourang* who swam ashore to Toangi atoll in the Marshall Islands. There, he told his story to a missionary, who in turn told it to Silvio Scherli of Trieste, Italy.

Mr Scherli was the source of the story in the Dutch newspaper. The reason the crew member gave for the mystery was that the ship had been carrying an illicit load of sulphuric acid, and fumes escaping from broken containers had overpowered the crew. There have since been many other theories about what other top secret cargo the ship may have been carrying instead – being not long after the end of the Second World War, a cargo of poisonous gases has been suggested.

There are a few issues with the story – not least that there is no official registration for a ship named the *Ourang Medan* and, while the *Silver Star* did exist, by 1948 it was renamed the *SS Santa Cecilia* and more often to be

seen around Brazil, not the Strait of Malacca.

Following the 1948 Dutch articles, there appeared the earliest known English reference to the story, published by the United States Coast Guard in the May 1952 issue of the *Proceedings of the Merchant Marine Council*. The original narrator Silvio Scherli also apparently wrote a report on it for the Trieste "Export Trade" publication of September 28, 1959.



^ Ship

The earliest known English reference to the ship and the incident is in the May 1952 issue of the *Proceedings of the Merchant Marine Council*, published by the United States Coast Guard.[2] The word Ourang (also written Orang) is Malay or Indonesian for "man" or "person",[3] whereas Medan is the largest city on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, giving an approximate translation of "Man from Medan". Accounts of the ship's accident have appeared in various books and magazines, mainly on Fortean.a. Their factual accuracy and even the ship's existence, however, are unconfirmed, and details of the vessel's construction and history, if any, remain unknown. Searches for any official registration or accident investigation records have proven unsuccessful.[1]

The story's first appearance was a series of three articles in the Dutch-Indonesian newspaper *De Locomotief: Semarangsch handels- en advertentie-blad* (February 3, 1948,[4] February 28, 1948,[5] and March 13, 1948[6]). The story is mostly the same as the later versions, but with significant differences. The name of the ship that found the Ourang Medan is never mentioned, but the location of the encounter is described as 400 nautical miles (740 km; 460 mi) southeast of the Marshall Islands. The second and third articles describe the experiences of the sole survivor of the Ourang Medan crew, who was found by a missionary and natives on Toangi (sic) atoll in the Marshall Islands. The man, before perishing, tells the missionary that the ship was carrying a badly stowed cargo of sulphuric acid, and that most of the crew perished because of the poisonous fumes escaping from broken containers. According to the story, the Ourang Medan was sailing from an unnamed small Chinese port to Costa Rica, and deliberately avoided the authorities. The survivor, an unnamed German, died after telling his story to the missionary, who told the story to the author, Silvio Scherli of Trieste, Italy. The Dutch newspaper concludes with a disclaimer:

"This is the last part of our story about the mystery of the Ourang Medan. We must repeat that we don't have any other data on this 'mystery of the sea'. Nor can we answer the many unanswered questions in the story. It may seem obvious that this is a thrilling romance of the sea. On the other hand, the author, Silvio Scherli, assures us of the authenticity of the story."[4]

Wikipedia, December 2015

1952 was the earliest known mention of the story in English – that is, until now.

If the incident occurred in 1947-48, the first reporting of it was in 1948, and the first mention in English was in the US in 1952 – then how come I've found British newspaper articles on the subject from 1940? Written at least 7 years before the tragedy was even supposed to have happened. Peculiar, eh?

I've found mentions in two UK newspapers – The Yorkshire Post and The Daily Mirror, dating from subsequent days in November 1940. Here they are:

From the Yorkshire Evening Post, 21st November 1940:



EXPLOSIONS DEFEATED BOARDING PARTY

An eye-witness account of the last phase of a mysterious sea tragedy has been brought to Trieste by a merchant marine officer who went to the rescue of the steamer Ourang Medan off the Solomon Islands last November.

TRIESTE, Thursday.

Yorkshire Evening Post, 21st November 1940



had happened . . . mutiny . . . piracy . . prisoners revolt.

"At the end of 16 hours we sighted a big ship on the horizon. It flew no flag, was listing slightly to starboard, and the propeller motionless. From our bridge we could see it was the Ourang Medan.

"There was no sign of life on the quarter deck and no reply to our shouts through a megaphone.

Dead: No Wounds

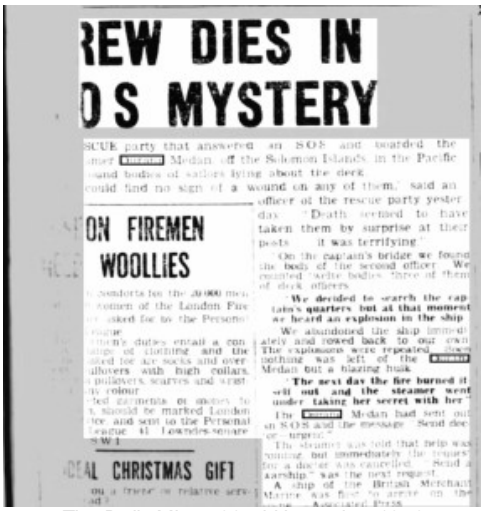
"We launched two lifeboats with eight men in each and rowed across to the Ourang Medan and boarded her.

"Bodies of sailors were lying about on the deck. We could find no sign of a wound on any of them. Death seemed to have taken them by surprise at their

Yorkshire Evening Post, 21st November 1940

And The Daily Mirror, 22nd November 1940:

The full pages, just to show they are indeed from 1940 –



REW DIES IN
0S MYSTERY

SCUE party that answered an SOS and boarded the ner Medan off the Solomon Islands in the Pacific found bodies of sailors lying about the deck could find no sign of a wound on any of them, said an officer of the rescue party yester day. "Death seemed to have taken them by surprise at their posts . . . it was terrifying."

On the captain's bridge we found the body of the second officer. We counted eight bodies, three of them of deck officers.

We decided to search the captain's quarters but at that moment we heard an explosion in the ship.

We abandoned the ship immediately and rowed back to our own. The explosions were repeated. Soon nothing was left of the Medan but a blazing hulk.

The next day the fire burned itself out and the steamer went under, taking her secret with her."

The Medan had sent out an SOS and the message. Send doc or urgent."

The master was told that help was coming but immediately the request for a doctor was cancelled. Send a warship" was the next request.

A ship of the British Merchant Marine was first to arrive on the scene.—Associated Press.

ON FIREMEN
WOOLLIES

EAL CHRISTMAS GIFT

The Daily Mirror, 22nd November 1940

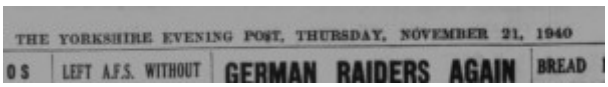


Yorkshire Evening Post, 21st November 1940

And –

These articles are available on the endlessly fascinating British Newspaper Archive, if you want to check yourself.

The details in both reports are the same, although it's more expanded in The Yorkshire Post. The reason for this is that they're both from the same source – The Associated Press. As the AP says, it's "the world's oldest and largest newsgathering organization." If it originated there, I would speculate that there must be an awful lot more newspapers in the world who reported this story in November 1940.



THE YORKSHIRE EVENING POST, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1940

0S | LEFT A.F.S. WITHOUT | GERMAN RAIDERS AGAIN | BREAD

Yorkshire Evening Post, 21st November 1940

Many details are the same as the 1948 version, with notable exceptions. There's nothing of the lurid details of how the dead crew looked; the ship is a steamship, not a freighter; and the location has changed again. In this first report, the ship was found south-east of the Solomon Islands.

Here's a map of that Pacific area, I've marked the Marshall Islands, the Solomon Islands and the Strait of Malacca:

See how they're a very long way away from each other, although admittedly in a sparsely populated region? In 1940, it's the Solomon Islands, in 1948 it's suddenly 1300 miles north in the Marshall Islands, and finally it's located a whole 4000 miles further west in the Strait of Malacca. I think it would be hard to have been so


TURNED OUT AT ALERT

PARTIES OUT OF RATES

Blitz Hotel

TRIPLE TEST OXYDOL

Just Jake

The Daily Mirror, 22nd November 1940


November 22 1940 THE DAILY MIRROR

TURNED OUT AT

The Daily Mirror, 22nd November 1940



mistaken as to where this ship was found.

Significantly, the SOS messages are markedly different. This is very interesting.

The first says "*SOS from the steamship Ourang Medan. Beg ships with shortwave wireless get touch doctor. Urgent.*" The second – "*Probable second officer dead. Other members crew also killed. Disregard medical consultation. SOS urgent assistance warship.*" The article says the ship then gave her position and ended with the final, incomplete, message *"crew has…"*

I suppose there was no need to mention warships the next time the story was dusted off, in post-war 1948.

Another notable difference is that the story claims to come directly from a merchant marine officer from the rescuing ship. Not a washed-up survivor from the sunken ship telling his story to a missionary. That rescuing ship wasn't named here, and for that matter it wasn't named in the 1948 version either. The detail of the *Silver Star* was thrown in later down the line, on its journey from newspaper report to legend.

BUT, and I think this is the crux of the story, we have the same detail that the information comes from Trieste, and was dated that very Thursday morning as well – in other words, that same day it appeared in the evening paper.

Trieste is the crucial link, as we can therefore assume that Silvio Scherli of Trieste is the same person involved in this story, as he was in the later version. If he was the source of the 1940 story, then there's simply no way he could have truthfully reported on the matter in 1948, describing it as a new incident. It could be the case that there was another source of the story in Trieste in 1940 – perhaps someone who told it to Silvio? If the story came from Indonesia, say, then the sources could be numerous. But Trieste seems too specific, and too distant, to have many witnesses or other people who knew about this story from far away. The Associated Press archives, or other newspaper stories which blossomed from their reports, might be the key here.

The Locomotive stated clearly that the entirety of its information came from Scherli – it ended its series with a very sceptical *"This is the last part of our story about the mystery of the Ourang Medan. We must repeat that we don't have any other data on this 'mystery of the sea'. Nor can we answer the many unanswered questions in the story. It may seem obvious that this is a thrilling romance of the sea. On the other hand, the author, Silvio Scherli, assures us of the authenticity of the story.*"

What's that I can smell? Is it a broken casket of sulphuric acid, or is it somebody's pants on fire?

It seems a likely theory that this "romance of the sea" began and ended with Mr Scherli. And if so, perhaps he got the taste for embellishing his story as the years went on – adding the staring eyes and gaping mouths and changing the location. *Ourang Medan* translates as "Man from Medan" in Indonesian or Malay and perhaps the city of Medan in Indonesia, which is directly adjacent to the Malacca Strait, may have belatedly felt like a more suitable location for a ship bearing its name.

It's an area where mysteries could, and obviously did, thrive – in fact the Marshall Islands have also been proposed as the site where Amelia Earhart crash-landed.

In the end, my theory is that Silvio didn't get quite the notoriety he sought the first time round, the news buried by the events of the ongoing world war. Perhaps he sat on it until the war ended, world news quietened down, and tried again. But maybe there's more still to be found in how this story got off the ground.

Either way, don't believe everything you read in the papers.

10 Responses

- Comments10

1. Steven Hargraves says:
January 2, 2016 at 6:14 pm

Another piece of sterling investigative reporting.

Reply

- Estelle says:
January 2, 2016 at 11:23 pm

Thank you!

2. Gary Adams says:
March 11, 2016 at 2:47 am

I have an interest in mysterious stories like this one, and I always thought the the lurid details in this story seemed fishy. This is an excellent piece of reporting. Thank you so much for getting to the truth of this matter.

3. Estelle says:
March 11, 2016 at 10:12 am

Thanks so much!

4. HD says:
April 24, 2016 at 11:15 pm

Dear Bishop,
I was intrigued with your article about: "The Myth of the Ourang Medan Ghost Ship". A couple of days ago the story was posted on Facebook and since I am a bit of a war history buff, Fb may have selected me to show me info about the Ourang Medan. I started googeling the subject and read the story in Dutch in the references 5,6,and 7in the following Wikipedia article.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ourang_Medan
This story gave the most complete account of the disaster, more than any other article on internet. However many questions remain.
First of all, this event must have happened around the time when the papers published this news item in November 1940. At that time China was at war with Japan. Also in Europe WWII was in full swing. So not much attention had been given to this disaster. At the same time Japan was taking over many Islands in the Pacific, which became a threat to the security of the USA. The sole survivor ended up on the Toangi Atoll, an atoll in the Marshall Group. Here it begins, the Toangi Atoll is uninhabited due to lack of freshwater. During the war the Japanese had an outpost there, but dismantled it soon after the soldiers could not sustain themselves. So I also suspect that a missionary would not station himself on a uninhabited island. The account in the Indonesian Dutch newspaper is very detailed. The crew consisted out of the captain, the first mate and a second mate???????? as being the only Europeans. The rest of the crew were Chinese or a mixture thereof. In the forties of the previous century things were totally different and there is no comparison with the time we live in now. One example the "zoutzuur" what was the main part of the cargo, Dutch for hydrochloric acid, was in these days stored in huge glass bottles of about 70 cm high and about 50 cm in diameter. These bottles were put in a woven basket and straw was used between the glass and the basket to prevent breakage. In the ships papers the first mate found, after the captain had died of poisoned fumes in the machine room, was stated, that the packaging of the freight was not suitable for transport via sea. Normally the first- or second mate supervise the loading of the ship in a harbour with experienced dockworkers. This also seems not to have happened. The ship was loaded by inexperienced peasants, while the ship was anchored in a river somewhere in China obviously outside the warzone. The ship was heading for Costa Rica and after unloading the cargo, it was

planned that the freighter would go to a breaker in Panama for scrap metal. She was a 40 year old coal fired steamship. It had been at one stage converted in a troop transport ship by the Chinese army and was totally unsuitable to use for further exploitation. It seems that this was a smuggling operation as they also avoided the normal shipping lanes. The ship by itself must have been insured, as the captain suggested to the first mate who had no identification papers like most of the crew, to create a fire on its way to Panama after having unloaded its cargo. So in that case when they were rescued, they had a good excuse for the authorities to obtain new identification papers.
I suspect that the sole survivor did not die in arms of a Franciscan priest, but had to sit out the war in the pacific. And that he was the illustrious person who contacted the Dutch newspaper in the former Dutch colony, called at that time Dutch East Indie with his story. Therefore in 1948 it became in the news again. With suspect I mean suspect, as I don't know of course for sure, but he would not give his name while he mentioned the name and nationality of the captain. He indicated he had been for a while on the run for whatever reasons with many weird adventures. So this could have been the reason that he wanted to remain anonymous. However, he may have needed to get this adventure of his chest.

5. Estelle says:
April 26, 2016 at 11:32 pm

Thanks – incredible how detailed that report is! I love your theory, and maybe, who knows? To me though, I think that if that had been the case why wouldn't the story in 1948 include the extra drama of a shipwrecked castaway for 8 years? In 1948 it's written as a very recent thing, with a different SOS, etc. Plus – no one's found any evidence that a ship called Ouran Medan was ever registered…..

- HD says:
May 1, 2016 at 2:02 am

That is a very good question. I give you my thoughts. The newspaper called: "De Locomotief" was located in Indonesia in a city called Semarang at the island of Java. Semarang is a city with a major harbour. I suspect that first of all Mr Silvio Scherli, if it was him, after the war was finished, he could get out of hiding from the Marshall Islands from the Japs and return to his profession as seafarer. I can imagine that through his ordeal he would have what we now call PTSD. He wanted to get his story heard. In 1948 he could have made the hoax SOS call in the strait of Malacca by himself. Knowing that in this very busy waterway they would never trace him making a false SOS call with the wrong coordinates. After having made that call from the ship he continued sailing and moored in the harbour of Semarang. Over there he may have connected the newspaper and got his story published. OK about not being registered with Lloyds London. In the link below I found the following statement:
"Searching the Dutch shipping records in Amsterdam seemed only to deepen the mystery. There was no mention of the ship at all, and my enquiries to the maritime authorities in Singapore drew a blank.
https://shortoncontent.wordpress.com/2015/01/15/the-ss-ourang-medan-death-ship-updated/
The story starts in 1940 in China which was at that time at war. When ships sink during a war they are usually not covered by an insurance. De captain who Silvio Scherli called a criminal, may have been the owner of the ship. Combined with his smuggling operation he may not at all have gone to Lloyds in London, but assuming the ship was insured there are always alternatives. Lloyds is very pricy compared with other insurers. The captain could have been lying to Silvio about setting the ship on fire, just keep him off his back.
So the ship was assumed to have been registered in The Netherlands. Using their flag does not mean it is registered. Especially when one is involved in smuggling and has already a shady crew onboard, many without identification papers.
I did Google the name Silvio Scherli and everything what came up was related to the Ourang Medan. I closed off my computer and after I opened it later on up again, I had suddenly the following link showing on my screen.
http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?
gl=IMG_PASSLISTS&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=0&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsln=Scherli&uidh=000&so=2
This webpage shows Mr Silvio Scherli entering the USA 10 times. With this we may conclude that he was not a immigrant, but has been on a crew list. One entry referred to him sailing on MS Vulcania Trieste as homeport. On one of the last entries he flew to the USA in 1956 if I remember

correctly. He indeed came from Trieste, Italy and was born in 1901. With this info you can conclude that he was a seaman.
Now another take, there was a blog on a Dutch website. They were going to and fro about the myth of the Ourang Medan. At one of the last entries one decided it was a hoax, because he had met during a social visit a Italian young man. He was sharing with him the story of the Ourang Medan. This young man said: “I know that story. As a boy I read always cheap adventure stories similar like James Bond etc. One day I bought another booklet with the full story about the Ourang Medan”. This blogger decided after having received this information from this Italian young man, that it was a hoax. Not knowing your discovery about the event happening around November 1940. While this blog was from 2012 and say the young man was 23 years old, we are then talking about him reading the story, say approximately 15 years ago or less.
http://www.grenswetenschap.nl/permalink.asp?i=8931

6. Estelle says:
May 1, 2016 at 8:36 am

Interesting…….especially the info about Scherli. All the answers lie with him, don’t they….

7. NoLiberals says:
September 20, 2016 at 1:21 pm

Your proof is very lacking. You show newspaper clippings that mention the Ourang Medan but none of them show a date. You only say they’re from 1940. The one clipping that does show the date has an illegible article that you can’t zoom into.

This article is a Blair Witch Project style article. Nicely written, seemingly legitimate and seemingly credible but the evidence doesn’t stack up.

- Estelle says:
September 20, 2016 at 4:22 pm

That’s why I posted the articles and the full pages – so you could read the articles themselves and also see the page they’re on with the date. you could zoom into them if you had an ipad or similar. There’s two pages that do have the dates. If you had a subscription to the British Newspaper Archive you could check them for yourself, if you so wished! I’ve posted up all the evidence I have and I can assure you those articles are real.

Thanks so much for the nicely written compliment by the way, and I love the idea of a Blair Witch style article to “solve” a historical mystery actually, but it’s outside the remit of my blog which isn’t as imaginative as that! I just upload things from my old book collections and interesting things I’ve found in the archives.

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Video shows tussle over naked Hillary Clinton statue in NYC

yahoo.com

October 18, 2016

JAKE PEAI

NEW YORK (AP) — A statue of a topless, hoofed Hillary Clinton appeared outside a subway station Tuesday, prompting a tussle after one woman purposely knocked it down and sat on it to prevent others from picking it back up.

The display marked the second time a life-size, exaggerated depiction of a naked presidential nominee has surfaced outside a Manhattan subway stop during the general election campaign. In August, an artist's statue of an unclothed Donald Trump was eventually hauled away by city workers.

But the crowd's reaction to the naked Clinton was markedly different from that to the Trump statue, when a largely jovial group of onlookers took photos of it and posed for selfies. Some parts of the portly Trump's genitalia were visible in that statue.

On Tuesday, a woman can be seen on video taken by a reporter for the New York Daily News dragging the life-size structure of the Democratic presidential nominee to the ground, stomping on it and even sitting on top of it to prevent a man from standing it back up again.

"We shouldn't be treated this way. Period," another woman can be heard saying in the video.

It wasn't immediately clear who created the Clinton statue. An activist collective called INDECLINE was behind the naked Trump statue but said in a statement that it had no role in the Clinton one.

A police spokesman said the Clinton statue was eventually removed by whoever brought it to lower Manhattan, and no summonses or tickets were issued.

Representatives for Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Clinton supporter, haven't responded to questions about the statue. In August, a spokesman for the parks department issued a tongue-and-cheek statement in explaining that the statue of the Republican presidential nominee was removed because it was being displayed without a permit.

"NYC Parks stands firmly against any unpermitted erection in city parks, no matter how small," spokesman Sam Biederman said then.

The Clinton campaign didn't respond to a request for comment.

Carin Kuoni, a professor of contemporary art and political engagement at The New School, said the Clinton statue could be seen as offensive rather than satirical since women have been defined for years in culture, media and politics by how they look.

"The history of how the female body appears has clearly been so negatively coded and inscribed that it makes for a completely different intervention when you see the sculpture of a naked woman than when you see a naked man," she said.

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Cops: Naked man drove with electrical wires attached to penis

clickorlando.com

By Peter Burke - Local10.com Managing Editor
Posted: 1:01 PM, November 02, 2016 Updated: 1:39 PM, November 02, 2016

BOYNTON BEACH, Fla. - A South Florida man was arrested on Halloween after he was driving naked through a Boynton Beach neighborhood with electrical wires protruding from his penis, police said.

Kurt Jenkins, 56, faces charges of lewd and lascivious exhibition, exposure of sexual organs and resisting a law enforcement officer without violence.

According to a Boynton Beach police report, a witness called police to complain of a naked man who was driving slowly through the neighborhood. The witness said the naked man, later identified as Jenkins, pulled up alongside him and gestured for him to look at Jenkins' groin area.

"(The witness) observed Jenkins was completely naked and saw an electronic device with wires, which was attached to Jenkins' penis," the police report said.

According to the report, the witness said Jenkins opened the passenger door and asked him to get inside. The witness declined but took a photograph of Jenkins naked behind the wheel.

Police said Jenkins made several passes through the neighborhood, slowing down -- "almost to a complete stop" -- as several children from a nearby school were dropped off.

When police arrived and ordered Jenkins to get on the ground, he refused, Officer Antonio Donnino wrote in his report. Officers then grabbed Jenkins and took him to the ground, handcuffing him with his hands behind his back, the report said.

Jenkins was being held at a Palm Beach County jail. He was expected to appear in bond court Wednesday morning.

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Glasgow central station closed after 'man falls from hotel window'

11:52, 11 Nov 2016 Updated 17:49, 11 Nov 2016 By Anthony Bond

mirror.co.uk



'Man in horror fall' at Glasgow Central train station

Part of Glasgow central station has been closed after reports a man fell from a hotel window in front of horrified witnesses.

People outside the station say they heard a 'thud' as a naked man fell to the ground.

One witness said that police were holding the man by his ankles as he was hanging out of a window.

The man, who didn't want to be named, told Glasgow's Evening Times: "The cops had a hold of him, and he was literally hanging out of the window naked with the police holding on to him by his ankles.

"He was wriggling, trying to get away from the cops, and after about five minutes down he went, three floors, and landed on the table in the coffee shop right outside Central Station.

"The ambulance arrived and tried to get the guy back on track, but I don't know if he's got much chance to be honest."



Twitter/Sophie Wallace

Glasgow Central station, reports of a person falling from hotel window

Croydon tram crash: Family 'in bits' after new dad set to wed girlfriend was killed in horror derailment

A woman described the scene during a live broadcast on Periscope which was filmed out of a window in a building nearby.

Angela Haggerty told how she heard the "very loud crashing noise" and screams in the street below.

She said a lot of people pointed and took pictures on their cameras, though she couldn't see where they were pointing.

Ms Haggery described seeing a journalist below "put his hands to his face and look very upset".

The incident also left commuters waiting at the station horrified.

Emma Baxter said: “Can’t stop shaking after what just happenned at Glasgow Central Station."

Simone Low added: “A man has just jumped from the 3rd or 4th floor outside my office at Glasgow Central Station, the street is cordoned off... I can’t believe it.”

Glasgow Central station, reports of a person falling from hotel window



Twitter/Sophie Wallace

Robert J Somynne added: “Just saw a man fall from the third floor of the hotel at central station in Glasgow onto the pavement in front of me. Praying for the guy.”

The BBC reported that police were called to the scene on Gordon Street at around 11am.

DailyMirror
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POLICE BLOTTER: Naked man seeking sex partner strikes out

By nwfdailynews.com

nwfdailynews.com
news & information for the emerald coast
Northwest Florida Daily News

Posted Nov 2, 2016 at 1:00 AM

SEAGROVE BEACH — A naked man was charged with disorderly intoxication after residents of the Grand Isle Condominiums complained about him Oct. 28.

The 27-year-old from White Pine, Tennessee was banging on windows and doors, according to his Walton County Sheriff's Office arrest report.

When deputies arrived, the man was completely naked and appeared to be extremely intoxicated. His speech was slurred and he could not walk straight, deputies reported.

He was holding an unopened can of Coors beer and said he didn't how much he'd consumed or where he was staying.

He was banging on doors because he was looking for someone to have sexual intercourse with, he told police. His clothes were found in the parking lot.

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NASA is looking for unlikely animal on Mars

aol.com

Oct 21st 2016 6:09AM

NASA scientists have much to discover about Mars, but they are getting quite a bit of help from volunteers.

Citizen scientists have been assisting with locating "spiders" on Mars.

The sort they're looking for are not, of course, the creepy crawly kind, but rather terrain features that bear a striking resemblance to the arachnids.

Such patterns form when ice layers closest to the ground melt, sending carbon dioxide and dust into the upper sheet.

According to NASA, "...the volunteers have been exploring the surface of Mars by reviewing images from the Context Camera (CTX) on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and identifying certain types of seasonal terrains near Mars' south pole."

They have already located nearly 2 dozen places of interest not previously known to the agency.

Now that they have been identified, the NASA will be using its mighty HiRISE camera to investigate further.

Candice Hansen, HiRISE Deputy Principal Investigator, said, "Thanks to the discovery power of so many people, we're using HiRISE to take images of places we might not have studied without this assistance."

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Nat Turner's Skull To Be Returned To Descendants After Nearly 200 Years

huffingtonpost.com

10/17/2016 04:59 pm ET

Zeba BlayVoices Culture Writer, The Huffington Post



Photo 12 via Getty Images

The discovery of Nat Turner following the failure of his rebellion.

After almost two centuries, the remains of Nat Turner have finally been returned to his family.

Turner was executed at age 31 in 1831 after leading an unsuccessful slave rebellion in Southampton County, Virginia. Turner was captured from hiding two months after leading a group of slaves and free blacks on a rampage that resulted in the deaths of 55 white people.

His body was flayed, beheaded and quartered, with most of his remains kept for scientific use and his skull reportedly passed through several private hands over the years. Now, according to National Geographic, Nat Turner's skull has been recovered and placed in the care of his descendants.

Shannon Batton Aguirre and Shelly Lucas Wood, the great-great-great-great-granddaughters of Turner, were given the skull by Richard Gordon Hatcher, the former and first black mayor of Gary, Indiana.

"The legacy of Nat Turner has had enduring impact, not simply upon our family, but upon American history," Aguirre said at a ceremony held in early October.

"Certainly, this fragile fragment holds enormous emotional value for me, for my family. But it is of immeasurable value because it is a poignant reminder of the price of freedom. In a very tangible way, it asserts the humanity of people who were systemically dehumanized. Its incredible existence demands acknowledgment that, yes, this black life mattered."

Since receiving the skull, the family has temporarily placed it with the Smithsonian Institution, where DNA testing will be done to determine whether it is the authentic remains of Nat Turner. If the test renders positive results, the family plans to bury his remains next to his descendants.

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Haunted hospital left abandoned because 'it is home to NAZI ghosts'

dailymail.co.uk

The haunted hospital left abandoned because 'it is home to NAZI ghosts': Polish medical centre taken over by Hitler's troops was mysteriously closed down in 1993

- **The complex in western Poland's town of Legnica was built in the 1930s for the needs of the German Army**
- **After World War II it ended up in Soviet hands, where the high-tech facilities attracted the Soviet elite**
- **But it was mysteriously abandoned in 1993, and was never reused despite the building's potential**
- **Locals say it is cursed and haunted by Nazi ghosts. They also believe the Nazis did experiments there**

By Charlie Moore For Mailonline

Published: 13:18 EST, 7 November 2016 | Updated: 17:39 EST, 7 November 2016

A Polish medical centre that was once a state-of-the-art Nazi hospital is lying empty because it is 'haunted by ghosts'.

The complex in western Poland's town of Legnica was built in the 1930s for the needs of the German army and was effectively operational from 1937.

After World War II it ended up in Soviet hands and the high-tech facilities attracted the Soviet elite such as President Leonid Brezhnev's wife Viktoria.





Haunted: A Polish medical centre that was once a state-of-the-art Nazi hospital is lying empty because it is haunted by 'ghosts'

Spooky: The complex in western Poland's town of Legnica, which had a swimming pool, was built in the 1930s for the needs of the German army and was effectively operational as of 1937

But it was mysteriously abandoned in 1993, and was never reused despite the building's potential.

Locals say it is cursed and haunted by ghosts from the Nazi era. They also believe the Nazis did experiments there, with the bodies of those murdered still buried on the site.

- Jewish group accuses Trump team of antisemitism after... Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg are investigated by... Privacy outcry as France plans to compile personal data...

A few years ago a group of locals tried to generate interest in having the building used for a practical purpose.

They arranged a public meeting and a tour of it, which resulted in one person dying when a sheet of glass gave way under a man who fell 33 feet to his death.



Eerie: After World War II the hospital ended up in Soviet hands, where the high-tech facilities attracted the Soviet elite such as President Leonid Brezhnev's wife Viktoria. Pictured: Tools are left on the hospital floor

Empty: The hospital was mysteriously abandoned in 1993, and was never reused despite the building's potential. Pictured: A storage room



Since then the hospital has been closed off, and although deserted, it is watched over by security guards with dogs.

There is an extensive network of tunnels inside and it is speculated that the hospital had only ever been a front for the Nazis in order to move agents around the region.

Others pointed out that when the Russians left the hospital in 1993, they left much of the equipment there.

While some equipment was stolen by local thieves, most of it still remains in the building. This includes medical reports, medication, old newspapers and hospital beds.

Creepy: Locals say it is cursed and haunted by ghosts from the Nazi era. They also believe the Nazis did experiments there, with the bodies of those murdered still buried on the site. Pictured: The old toilet block



Gruesome: A few years ago locals arranged a tour but one person died when a sheet of glass gave way under a man and he fell 33ft to his death. Pictured: An operating theatre

Large: The complex had two main hospital buildings and it was impressive, with the front wall of the complex some 235 metres long

Wojciech Kondusza, who wrote a book about the Red Army, said: 'Germans equipped the hospital with the most modern technology. The complex had two main hospital buildings and it was impressive, with the front wall of the complex some 235 metres long.'

The hospital complex consisted of 24 buildings located in the middle of a forest. It included administrative buildings, warehouses, fuel depots, an autopsy room, laboratories, boiler rooms, canteens, clubs, a full-size swimming pool, a cinema, a club with a stage, and even a chapel which has survived in excellent condition.

The garden of the hospital was full of special bushes, plants, and statues. The hospital rooms were on three floors with balconies so the patients could enjoy the fresh air and the view of the garden.

Airy: The hospital rooms were on three floors with balconies so the patients could enjoy the fresh air and the view of the garden



Waste: While some equipment was stolen by local thieves, most of it still remains in the building. This includes medical reports, medication, old newspapers (pictured) and hospital beds

Run-down: There is an extensive network of tunnels inside and it is speculated that the hospital had only ever been a front for the Nazis in order to move agents around the region

According to Kondusza, Soviet Russians took over the hospital at the end of WWII and made no alterations. They used it until 1993.

The facility was only to accommodate army personnel or state officials and was an 'evacuation hospital'. This meant only two thirds of its 650 bed capacity was used. One third had to be left empty at all times in case of war.



Kondusza said: 'This is a huge and very interesting complex. I hope that it will find new owners who will value the old architecture. It would be a real jewel if renovated.'

Left behind: When the Russians left the hospital in 1993, they left much of the equipment there. Pictured: A washbasin

Cold: The hospital has been closed off, and although deserted, it is watched over by security guards with dogs



Elite: The facility was only to accommodate army personnel or state officials and was an 'evacuation hospital'

But its rich history is reportedly just as interesting, for example in 1972, locals said they spotted a convoy of black luxury cars in front of the hospital.

One said that a friend of his serving in the Russian army told him Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev was visiting his sick wife at the hospital.

The legend is potentially accurate as Brezhnev did indeed visit Poland at that time and the hospital was well-equipped and staffed with the best doctors, according to local media.

Scary: Only two thirds of its 650 bed capacity was used. One third had to be left empty at all times in case of war

Mouldy: According to Kondusza, Soviet Russians took over the hospital at the end of WWII and made no alterations. They used it until 1993

Comments (14

The comments below have not been moderated.

Decius, Dartmouth, Canada, about 6 hours ago



AH was asked what he missed not being able to do now that he was famous. He said he missed going shopping and having a quiet tea or coffee while watching the crowds go by.

sarcastic, manuel antonio, Costa Rica, about 6 hours ago

BOO !

Ghost of Gardenfield, Little Horkesley, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

How come the Germans were there in 1937 ? They did not invade until 1939 ?

2 of 4 repliesSee all replies

Denis Barre, Lisieux, France, about 7 hours ago

Until the second world war, it had been part of Germany for about a thousand years.

Rabmac1, Cambs, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

@Ghost. Please, if you do not know about the History, and you cannot be bothered to investigate (all is apparent on the WebSphere), please do not post silly questions. You are a fine example of the ignorant, sorry to say. Sorry mate, but learn a lesson newbie

LadyJJ, Blackburn, United Kingdom, about 8 hours ago

The "washbasin" pictured is in fact a toilet,the crouch over type,popular in many European countries at one time.

Rabmac1, Cambs, United Kingdom, about 3 hours ago

Sadly still the same, visit Paris. Holes in the ground. Civilised Country? No, Afraid Not

Maggie, Chorley, about 9 hours ago

Most likely the medical center was left in a derelict state by Soviet soldiers (which happened quite commonly) who left around 1990 and the local council has not had funds to develop it yet.

Taxi Mick, Kingswinford, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

What a joke. If this was in the UK they'd have knocked it down and built flats on it years ago. The ghosts will either move on to haunt somewhere else or pass into the afterlife. Either way, problem solved.

notasnowflake, Somewhere., United Kingdom, about 10 hours ago

It took them nearly 50 years to find out???

Daisy the Dog, Swindon, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago









Why are Nazi ghosts any scarier than normal ghosts ?

Denis Barre, Lisieux, France, about 7 hours ago

And how do you discover the political opinions of a ghost?

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The anti-Semitic sect, S&M orgy and a sinister bid to muzzle the press

18:03 EST, 20 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

The disturbing links between an anti-Semitic sect, an S&M orgy and a sinister bid to muzzle the press

- **Society of St Pius X is a Roman Catholic sect accused of anti-Semitism**
- **It is a registered charity with links to Independent Press Regulation Trust**
- **Max Mosley 'using IPRT' to channel money to fund independent regulator**
- **Mr Mosley has been 'on mission' against press since S&M party exposure**

By Richard Pendlebury for the Daily Mail

When Nazi war criminal Erich Priebke died in Rome in October 2013 his funeral caused a riot.

The former SS captain had been extradited from Germany, convicted and jailed for the massacre of hundreds of Italian civilians in 1944.

Shortly before his own death, aged 100, Priebke affirmed his belief that the Holocaust — the Nazis' extermination of six million Jews — was a hoax.

Priebke was a monster. But he was also a baptised Roman Catholic and his family wanted a burial service in a church.



Swiss Bishop Bernard Fellay, pictured, is head of Roman Catholic sect the Society of St Pius X (SSPX) which has been accused of anti-Semitism

The Vatican refused: holy premises were to be off-limits for a 'manifest sinner'.

Then, to widespread outrage that led to that riot, an already controversial breakaway Roman Catholic sect stepped in to give this unrepentant Nazi his dying wish.

The Society of St Pius X (SSPX) is no stranger to accusations of anti-Semitism.

Its current leader, a Swiss bishop named Bernard Fellay, has recently described Jews as 'the enemies of the Church'; one of its former bishops was, like Priebke, a Holocaust-denier.

Another war criminal who was wanted for murdering Jews was eventually tracked down decades afterwards — to his refuge in a Society of St Pius X monastery.

The Society's ultra-reactionary Catholicism rejects gay rights and sexual equality.

Its founder, a controversial French cleric, was once fined for racial intolerance (he was accused of fomenting hatred of Muslim immigrants).

To many — such as the Anti-Defamation League, which fights prejudice against Jews — the SSPX is an exemplar of modern-day anti-Semitism.

Yet the organisation is also a UK-registered charity. At the head of its six-strong board of trustees — which includes Bishop Fellay — is a man named Wilfrid Vernor-Miles, a London-based tax lawyer to the rich.

He and his father — one of the best-connected legal clans in the country — are also trustees of a Catholic charity which makes significant donations to the Society of St Pius X, as we shall see.

But Wilfrid Vernor-Miles is also a trustee of another charity. It is called the Independent Press Regulation Trust (IPRT).

Its role is potentially pivotal in the battle for the future freedom, or otherwise, of a British Press which has sometimes called the SSPX and its offshoots to account.

That is because the IPRT is the vehicle through which motor-racing tycoon Max Mosley has been channelling his money — via his own family trust fund — to finance a would-be ‘independent’ UK press regulator called Impress.

Founded by a Labour activist called Jonathan Heawood, and backed by the anti-Press pressure group Hacked Off, Impress has applied for recognition from a quango established by David Cameron’s coalition administration, the Press Recognition Panel.

This was established by Royal Charter after the Leveson Inquiry into the Press.

It is now thought possible, if not likely, that next Tuesday the Panel will indeed recognise Impress as an official regulator.

If Impress does secure approval from the Panel, it will trigger the implementation of a new law under which devastating punitive damages can be awarded against publications that lose libel actions and do not belong to Impress.



The SSPX is a registered charity linked to another, the Independent Press Regulation Trust, which Max Mosley has been 'channelling' money to finance an 'independent' press regulator called Impress

This, of course, will include all of Britain’s mainstream newspapers, which have refused to acknowledge the Press Recognition Panel, thereby declining to endorse what would be the State’s authorised Press policeman.

Mr Mosley, the loyal son of British Union of Fascists leader Sir Oswald Mosley, would like that.

He has been on a mission to ‘reform’ the Press since his predilection for sadomasochistic orgies was exposed in 2008 by the now defunct News of the World.

In short, he is a man with a very big axe to grind.

The Independent Press Regulation Trust was established to present a cordon sanitaire between the tycoon’s naked desire for revenge and the ‘independent’ press regulator, Impress, which he has promised to underwrite to the tune of nearly £4 million, virtually all of its income.

Mr Mosley would supposedly be several steps removed from the regulator’s business.

But that carefully planned arrangement cannot disguise the forces at play here, which begs the question of how ‘independent’ and fit for purpose the Independent Press Regulation Trust really is.

Today, a Mail investigation can reveal how, for the second time in 80 years, the wealthy and influential Mosley and Vernor-Miles families are working side by side in an endeavour which focuses on the media.

It also reeks of an urge to control, and has troubling links to racial bigotry.

The year was 1932 and Ernest Vernor-Miles, grandfather of our modern-day tax lawyer Wilfrid, decided to convert to Catholicism.

Two years later he bought the Catholic Herald, a weekly newspaper for the faithful which had a circulation of almost 100,000.

In the year of Vernor-Miles’s conversion, the aristocratic former Labour MP Sir Oswald Mosley formed the British Union of Fascists.

His hard-core supporters were known as the ‘Blackshirts’ after the uniform they wore that was based on Hitler and Mussolini’s cohorts.

For a brief period some of the mainstream press — this paper and the Daily Mirror included — praised the BUF’s supposedly ‘conservative’ agenda.

That support soon evaporated as violence and an intolerance that was very evidently ‘un-British’ became synonymous with the movement.

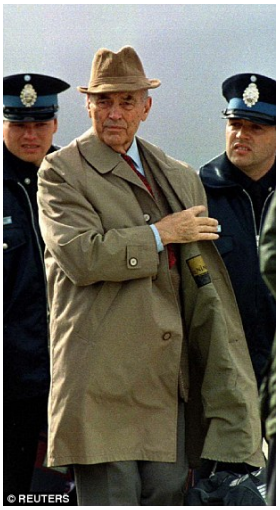
But not so with the Vernor-Miles-owned Catholic Herald.

Nazi war criminal Erich Priebke, left in 1995 and right in the 1940s during service in Rome, was granted a burial service by the SSPX despite a refusal by the Vatican

Throughout the rest of the 1930s up until the outbreak of war with Nazi Germany, the Herald expressed, at best, a moral ambivalence towards fascism.

At worst it suggested a solidarity of purpose with it.

The Herald condemned the Blackshirts’ street fights, crude anti-Semitism and worship of State power over God.





But it admired much about the Fascists' authoritarianism, and reminded readers that a 'Jewish problem' really existed.

This week the Mail has examined the Catholic Herald's archives in Cambridge University library.

The examples uncovered, which were published under the Vernor-Miles ownership, are damning.

In the edition of August 17, 1935, under the headline 'Fascism', a Herald article stated: 'To bring back social solidarity and to inspire the whole with the common end are the aims of Fascism and also of ourselves.'

It added: 'The principle of authority is essentially Catholic …'

In an article on the 'East End', published in October the following year, the Herald described Jewish citizens as 'an alien element'.

It added: 'Once again the crudities and brutalities of the Fascist campaign in East London and other Jewish quarters should not be allowed to blind us to the reality of the problem here.

'And it was not Fascism that created the problem but the Liberalism that allowed the Jew to become dominant in a then-Christian country.'

In January 1937, under the headline 'Resistance to Jewry', an article says: 'To pretend there is nothing substantial behind the complaints [of a contemporary newspaper called the English Fascist] is the attitude of the ostrich.

'To hush up the problem as if it were not fit to be talked about is to preclude the possibility of any solution but violence.'

In other words, there was a Jewish 'problem' that needed to be discussed.

Then in February 1938, the month before the Nazi takeover of Austria, the Herald carried a prominent report of a BUF rally in South London.



Max Mosley is the son of Sir Oswald Mosley, pictured, founding leader of the British Union of Fascists

The headline read: 'Cheers and salutes at Mosley meeting.'

Underneath it began: 'There was great enthusiasm when Sir Oswald Mosley addressed a meeting in Lewisham.

'He outlined the Blackshirt policy, many points of which are excellent.'

The Herald reported that 'the Leader' said: 'The National press is one long stream of lies.

'And this produces such a roar of assent as one thought only to hear on some occasions at Nuremberg.'

And so the Mosley and Vernor-Miles love-in continued with, for example, a large Herald piece in June 1938 which stated that: 'In England the growing strength of the British Union of Fascists is a hopeful sign …'

During the war, Sir Oswald Mosley was interned in Pentonville jail — a precaution against which his son Max Mosley, then a boy, railed in his recent autobiography.

Winston Churchill had also wanted Vernor-Miles's editor put behind bars for his paper's attacks on Britain's necessary alliance with Communist Russia against the Nazis. In the end, the Prime Minister was persuaded otherwise.

In 1948, Ernest Vernor-Miles was awarded a papal knighthood by Pope Pius XII, who has been much criticised for remaining silent about the Holocaust when it was taking place.

And what of that central player in this drama, Max Mosley?

By 1962, he was a married Oxford graduate and a Parachute Regiment reservist studying for the Bar.

But that summer he was arrested in Ridley Road, a predominantly Jewish area of Hackney, when trouble broke out at a provocative rally sparked by his father's fascistic Union Movement.

Mosley Junior had brawled with anti-Nazi protestors who attacked Sir Oswald.

The American Time magazine reported that prior to the clash, Mosley Senior's thugs had entered the neighbourhood shouting, like their 1930s forbears, 'Jews Out'.

Max Mosley was acquitted after a night in the cells. Eyewitnesses recall that his parents, Sir Oswald and the socialite Diana Mitford — at whose wedding Adolf Hitler was a guest — collected him in a chauffeured limousine.

The same year saw the start of the Second Vatican Council, which was convened by Pope St John XXIII to bring the Catholic Church into the late 20th century.

This modernisation was opposed by some clergy, including the afore-mentioned French cleric, Bishop Marcel Lefebvre, who, in response, founded the breakaway Society of St Pius X.

Today, it runs a number of seminaries, churches and schools around the world and remains apart from the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church in Rome.

Now dead, Lefebvre had been accused of collaboration with the French Vichy regime, which in turn collaborated with the Nazis during the war.

He also advocated support for France's far-Right National Front in more recent years.

In 1990, the SSPX founder was fined for fostering racial intolerance because of comments he made about Muslim immigrants from France's former colonies.

Other episodes brought the Society a bad press.

A Frenchman, Paul Touvier, was a Nazi collaborator who killed a number of Jews and helped deport others to Auschwitz.

After the war, Touvier went on the run and was sentenced to death in absentia.

He was finally caught by police in 1989, in a Society of St Pius X priory in Nice, where he had been sheltering with his family.

Perhaps the most high-profile scandal concerned the Society's British-born Bishop Richard Williamson, who in a 2009 television interview denied that the Nazis had ever used gas chambers to kill millions of Jews.

The furore after his comments was immense. The Society denied that the sect was in any way anti-Semitic, and yet fully three years passed before Williamson was expelled — and that was largely due to his opposition to any SSPX rapprochement with the Vatican.

Today, as I have established, it is the tax lawyer Wilfrid Vernor-Miles who is named in Charity Commission records as the point of contact for the Society of St Pius X. (His family no longer owns the Catholic Herald.)

Wilfrid's solicitor father John Vernor-Miles is another trustee. In fact, they are the only two lay members on the board.

Both father and son are partners at venerable City solicitors Hunters, which absorbed their family law firm Vernor Miles and Noble in 2011. Hunters acts for the SSPX.

Wilfrid and John Vernor-Miles are also two of the three trustees of another charity, called the Catholic Charitable Trust.

Charity Commission records show that each year the trust, which has a cash reserve of more than £2 million, gives thousands of pounds to a number of Catholic causes.



Sir Oswald Mosley is pictured walking down an avenue of saluting supporters, known as blackshirts, in the 1930s

But each year, by far the biggest beneficiary is the Society of St Pius X and its support groups around the world.

The latest accounts show that the trustees of the Catholic Charitable Trust gave the SSPX more than £20,000 in the financial year ending in December 2014.

A similar figure was donated the previous year — when the SSPX helped to bury the Nazi war criminal Erich Priebke.

It was to tax lawyer Wilfrid Vernor-Miles at his Hunters address that Jonathan Heawood, founder of the would-be Press regulator Impress, wrote cap in hand in July 2015 'in the hope that you and your fellow Trustees [of the Independent Press Regulation Trust] will be able to provide financial assistance towards the establishment and support of Impress'.

Mr Heawood's hopes of financial support were realised thanks to the millions that Max Mosley has promised to pour into Impress via the IPRT.

Despite its extensive financial support from Mr Mosley, today Impress still only regulates a handful of tiny news organisations — some of them distinctly Left-leaning.

In stark contrast, most mainstream papers, including the Daily Mail, are signed up to the newspaper industry-funded self-regulator IPSO (the Independent Press Standards Organisation).

The government quango set up to decide which body should oversee the Press, the Press Recognition Panel, has received a handsome grant of taxpayers' money from the Treasury to conduct its business. But in a year's time, that £3 million of funding will run out.

It must then support itself by charging any Press regulator it has recognised for periodic reviews of its activities. So far only one potential regulator has applied for recognition — Impress.

(The regulator most of the mainstream press supports, IPSO, has not sought recognition from the Press Recognition Panel for the simple reason that the press is not free if it is forced into regulation by judicial blackmail.)

So it is that the Press Recognition Panel must recognise Impress next Tuesday — or wither and die.

Of course without Mr Mosley's money, and the charity of which Mr Wilfrid Vernor-Miles is a trustee — the Independent Press Regulation Trust — there is no Impress.

The Press Recognition Panel prides itself on its liberal credentials — it even held a solemn debate on what to call its staff Christmas dinner, before settling on 'seasonal end of the year event' in order to avoid offending anyone.

How uncomfortable, then, that a key figure behind providing funding for Impress, Wilfrid Vernon-Miles, is so closely linked to the strange Catholic organisation that ran the gauntlet of outraged Italians to bury a former SS captain, and whose grandfather's Herald newspaper found such sympathy with the Fascist followers of Max Mosley's father.

Comments (

blocksof, somewhere rainy, about 6 hours ago

Nothing surprises me, money = power = control. Face it we live within a modern day serfdom, us peasants are just fodder for the rich.

MANC MAN, manchester, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

This article stinks

buckbe, cardiff, United Kingdom, about 7 hours ago

Now there's a surprise,not.

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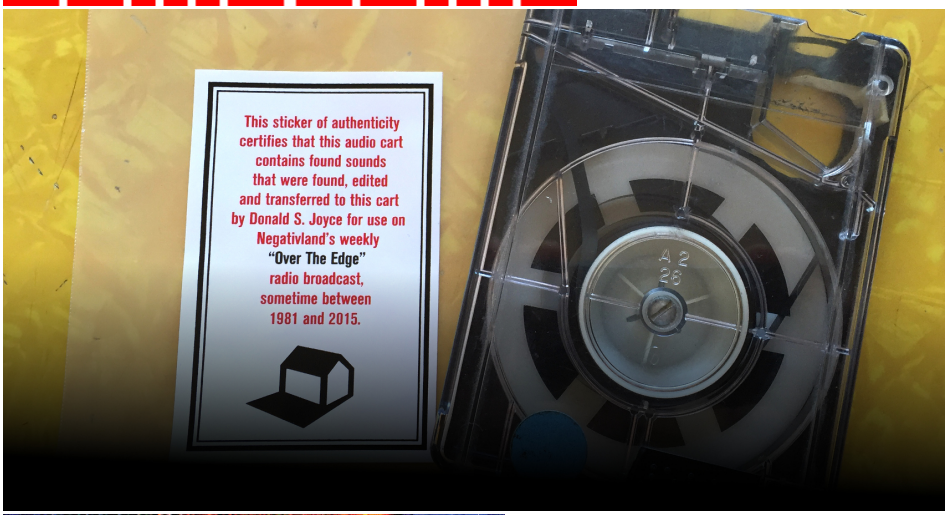
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Negativland's next album comes with a baggie of Don Joyce's cremains

By Negativland

boingboing.net

Negativland's next album comes with a baggie of Don Joyce's cremains





Good Hello, Consumers of Media About Media:

Courtesy of our friends at Boing Boing, this is Negativland speaking to you. Thank you for reading about all of our deaths over the past year and a half!

Though we have traditionally operated more as a collective entity than as a 'band', those of us that continue to be alive miss our recently departed members (Don Joyce, Richard Lyons and Ian Allen), and deeply valued seeing them publicly commemorated in ways they wouldn't have been able to tolerate for more than two seconds had they still been alive. (Except maybe for Richard, who would have loved it.)

Negativland is excited to announce our newest album: "The Chopping Channel", which is Volume 9 in the ongoing series of albums edited from our long-running livemix radio show, Over The Edge. Atop an atomized mix of thousands of fragmentary samples, remulched into one continuous and time-saving stream of music, the salesmen (and woman) of the Chopping Channel dare to sell you the music you're already listening to, as well as the flesh-and-bone essentials you'll need to survive in the global years to come. This project was completed before the deaths of Don and Richard, and it will be released on October 21, 2016.

In keeping with the album's theme, and while supplies last, each mail order copy of this new project comes with two very unique extra items: two grams of the actual cremains, or ashes, of deceased Negativland member Don Joyce, and one of Don's handmade audio tape loop "carts" used in the creation of Over The Edge and Negativland live performances between 1981 and 2015.

This is not a hoax. We've decided to take the Chopping Channel concept to its logical conclusion by "productizing" an actual band member. It is also a celebration of the degree to which no idea in art was ever off-limits to Don, and offers a literal piece of him, and of his audio art, for the listener to repurpose and reuse. We are pretty sure he would have wanted it this way.

Like most Negativland projects, the album's audio themes and packaging are deeply connected. To let you know more about "The Chopping Channel", our good friends at General Injectibles and



Signals, Inc. have produced this very informative educational video:

Thank you for listening.

- Negativland



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Emperor Nero returns to Rome in a rock musical

thelocal.it

19 October 2016 16:00 CEST+02:00



Part of the Domus Aurea site. Photo: Vincenzo Pinto/AFP

The Local
19 October 2016
16:00 CEST+02:00
A rock musical about Roman's most controversial emperor, Nero, will give new life to the place where he once lived.

Plans for the musical, Divo Nerone, were officially announced on Tuesday, and the show will premiere next year.

Telling the story of Emperor Nero's life, it will be performed in both Italian and English, starring 26 acrobats and 12 actors.

The musical was written by Grammy Award-winning lyricist Franco Migliacci and is directed by Gino Landi.

Some parts of the rotating stage - based on Nero's own spectacular rotating banquet hall - have already been constructed, and interactive technology, projections and 3D sets will all help tell the story of Rome's most decadent emperor.

The show's subtitle - 'the most fiery musical in history' - refers to the Great Fire of Rome, which burned for over five days in 64 AD, destroying or damaging ten of the city's 14 districts.

Some historians have suggested that Nero started the fire himself, while a popular myth states that he played the fiddle while the city burned; however, others argue that he wasn't in the city at the time, and contributed to the relief effort afterwards.

The stage will be in front of the Domus Aurea, a huge villa build by Nero between 64-68 AD in the space cleared by the fire and used to host his infamously decadent parties. The villa was closed to the public due to structural concerns in 2005.

However, the superintendent for the archaeological area of Rome, Francesco Prosperetti, said on Tuesday that the usage fees paid by the theatre company, as well as three percent of ticket proceeds, will be used for the restoration of the Domus.

Divo Nerone will be performed to audiences of 3,000 on a specially constructed stage on the Palatine Hill inside the historical Roman Forum from June 1st, 2017.

The Local Europe AB
Östgötagatan 12
116 25 Stockholm
Sweden

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New 3D technology raises hopes for the coldest of cold cases

Tamara Lush, Associated Press
October 21, 2016 Updated: October 22, 2016 10:46am

sfchronicle.com



Dr. Erin Kimmerle, associate professor n the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, gestures as she speaks to the members of the Art of Forensics conference Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, in Tampa, Fla. Kimmerle, and several forensic artists, have been working with law enforcement officials on cold cases in Florida to help give victims a face in hopes family members may recognize them. Photo: Chris O'Meara, AP / Copyright 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistribu

Photo: Chris O'Meara, AP

Dr. Erin Kimmerle, associate professor n the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, gestures as she speaks to the members of the Art of Forensics conference Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, in Tampa, Fla. Kimmerle, and several forensic artists, have been working with law enforcement officials on cold cases in Florida to help give victims a face in hopes family members may recognize them. less

Dr. Erin Kimmerle, associate professor n the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, gestures as she speaks to the members of the Art of Forensics conference Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, in



A clay bust and details surrounding an unidentified victim in a Florida cold case file is shown during the the Art of Forensics conference Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, in Tampa, Fla. University of South Florida associate professor for Anthropology Erin Kimmerle, and several forensic artists, have been working with law enforcement on cold cases in order to help victims have a face in hopes family members may recognize them. Photo: Chris O'Meara, AP / Copyright 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistribu



Dr. Erin Kimmerle, associate professor n the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, gestures as she speaks to the members of the Art of Forensics conference Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, in Tampa, Fla. Kimmerle, and several forensic artists, have been working with law enforcement officials on cold cases in Florida to help give victims a face in hopes family members may recognize them.

A clay bust and details surrounding an unidentified victim in a Florida cold case file is shown during the the Art of Forensics conference Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, in Tampa, Fla. University of South Florida associate professor for Anthropology Erin Kimmerle, and several forensic artists, have been working with law enforcement on cold cases in order to help victims have a face in hopes family members may recognize them.

A clay bust and details surrounding an unidentified victim in a Florida cold case file is shown during the the Art of Forensics conference Friday, Oct. 21, 2016, in Tampa, Fla. University of South Florida Photo: Chris O'Meara, AP

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — The faces are haunting.

They stare, straight ahead, unblinking and made of malleable clay. There are fourteen total, all busts of the missing, the unidentified, the murdered.

The forgotten.

These faces appeared before law enforcement, University of South Florida experts and the public for the first time on Friday. The clay busts were the effort of University of South Florida forensic anthropologists and forensic artists who pulled images of unidentified bodies from cold case files, printed their skulls in 3D plastic, then molded heads and faces that someone might recognize.

They're hoping to solve 20 cases, including 13 from Florida, four from Pennsylvania, and one each from Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee.

Some are decades old. Investigators hope that updated DNA procedures and chemical isotope testing will help them identify the bodies and ultimately, learn what happened to them.

"Time stands still for these victims," said Cpl. Tom McAndrew of the Pennsylvania State Police.

This is the second year of the Art of Forensics event. It was conceived by Joe Mullins, a forensic artist for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

While most of this year's 20 cold cases are of adults who were found dead, one was a baby. In August 2003, an infant's body was found in a pond in Gainesville. They think the remains are that of a girl. That's all investigators know; it's unclear how the baby died, and the artists did only a computer sketch of the baby.

Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell talked about the case, and said there is a "tsunami" of missing and unidentified cases in Florida, partially because of the state's transient population.

"Every single person represented here today was somebody's baby," she said. "This is the why of what we do in our work."

For Dr. Erin Kimmerle, a USF anthropologist and director of the school's Institute for Forensic Anthropology & Applied Science, it's about justice for the families, especially in cases of homicides.

"There's a reason there are no statutes of limitations on murder," she said. "Stripping someone of their life is the ultimate crime."

Investigators acknowledge it's a long shot to crack these cases, but say it's worth the effort. After last year's Art of Forensics event, one cold case victim was identified.

This year's event also has raised hopes. Two sisters showed up, and intensely compared one of the clay faces to a picture they carried of their older sister, missing since the late 1970s. They teared up at the resemblance, and a detective whisked them away to collect information, possibly generating a lead.

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This story has been updated to correct the numbers of cases in each state. For details about the cases, go to usf.edu/forensicsevent.

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Follow Tamara Lush at http://twitter.com/tamaralush

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New arrest in teen slaying linked to satanism

CRIME & COURTS / 19 September 2016, 07:44am
by TANKISO MAKHETHA
http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/new-arrest-in-teen-slaying-linked-to-satanism-2069767



Pretoria - Police may have edged closer to unravelling the mystery behind the 2010 murder of Pretoria teenager Anika Smit after arresting a 24-year-old man who claimed to have information.

The man is expected to appear in the Pretoria North Magistrate's Court on Monday in connection with the murder of the 17-year-old. Coincidentally, the inquest into the murder is scheduled to resume in the same court on Monday.

Anika Smit's body was found in her home in Theresa Park. Her hands were cut off and her body riddled with stab wounds. Her throat had been slit and she had been raped. The missing body parts were never found. Credit: SUPPLIED
Police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Lungelo Dlamini said the man handed himself in on Friday, saying he had information regarding the teenager's murder.

"The man told us he had information about the murder. He is expected to appear in court on Monday," Dlamini told the Pretoria News on Sunday.

Dlamini said he could not speak with certainty on what would transpire when he was asked if the turn of events would have any bearing on the ongoing inquest.

"The magistrate and prosecutor will have to decide what will happen to the inquest. The man is appearing in the same court where the inquest proceedings take place," Dlamini said.

"His allegations or the information he brings forward will be tested in court. Therefore we cannot say whether this will bring an end to the inquest."

Arno Olckers, legal representative for Anika's mother Charlotte Eksteen, said he could not comment on the arrest.

"I have been instructed by my client not to speak to the media. Anika's mother also wishes not to speak to the media at this

point," Olckers said.

Anika's body was found in her home in Theresa Park.

Her hands were cut off and her body riddled with stab wounds. Her throat had been slit and she had been raped. The missing body parts were never found.

Testimony on satanism and occult activities took centre stage when a witness known as "Vampire" took the stand during the inquest. The young man had used the name on the messaging app Mxit.

Vampire attended Pretoria North High School and had allegedly been bullied by other pupils because of his thin build.

He said the reputation of being affiliated with satanism followed him when he transferred to Gerrit Maritz High School, the same school Anika attended.

Vampire was one of numerous people taken in for questioning days after Anika's death.

In February, the inquest heard that Anika could also have dabbled in satanism and the occult following claims made by a neighbour.

Her neighbour Roelof Pottas said this was because of the way the teen changed her hair colour, nail colour and lip colour to black.

Pottas told the court that he believed she was possibly involved with satanism shortly before she was murdered.

The teenager had not gone to school on the day of her death because of an ear infection and Nico Venter, the boyfriend with whom she had just broken up, was arrested.

After charges against him were withdrawn, the investigation came to a standstill when investigating officer Major Mike van Aardt was transferred to handle the Oscar Pistorius case.

The inquest had been instituted in 2014 by magistrate Pierre Wessels, who said at the time that the aim was not to convict or acquit, but to allow records to assist him in deciding if there was sufficient evidence to prosecute anyone for the murder.

Wessels would examine records from the case, including the withdrawal of charges against Venter.

IOL is owned and run by Independent Media. The South African newspaper group publishes 15 national and regional newspapers, and several Cape-based community newspapers.

IOL's mission is to represent the group as a whole online, using a mix of elements from the newspaper titles along with fast-breaking news.

Where does the news on IOL come from?

The news on IOL comes primarily from the newspapers run by the Independent group in South Africa as well as from news wires. A small portion of our content is generated by IOL staff.

New Hampshire lawmaker is re-elected, arrested on same day

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 11, 2016

HOOKSETT, N.H. (AP) — A New Hampshire lawmaker wanted by police for failing to show up for a court hearing was re-elected and arrested on the same day.

New Hampshire Public Radio reports (http://bit.ly/2fjXd44) that Republican state Rep. Dick Marple was sitting outside a polling place with his campaign signs on Election Day when an officer recognized him. Marple was charged with driving without a valid license in December 2014.

Authorities had issued a bench warrant for his arrest after he failed to show up for a court hearing in October.

Police say Marple drove himself to the police station and was arrested.

He also was re-elected to a fifth term.

Marple said Friday he is being targeted as a troublemaker because he strictly interprets the state constitution.

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Information from: WEVO-FM, http://www.nhpr.org/

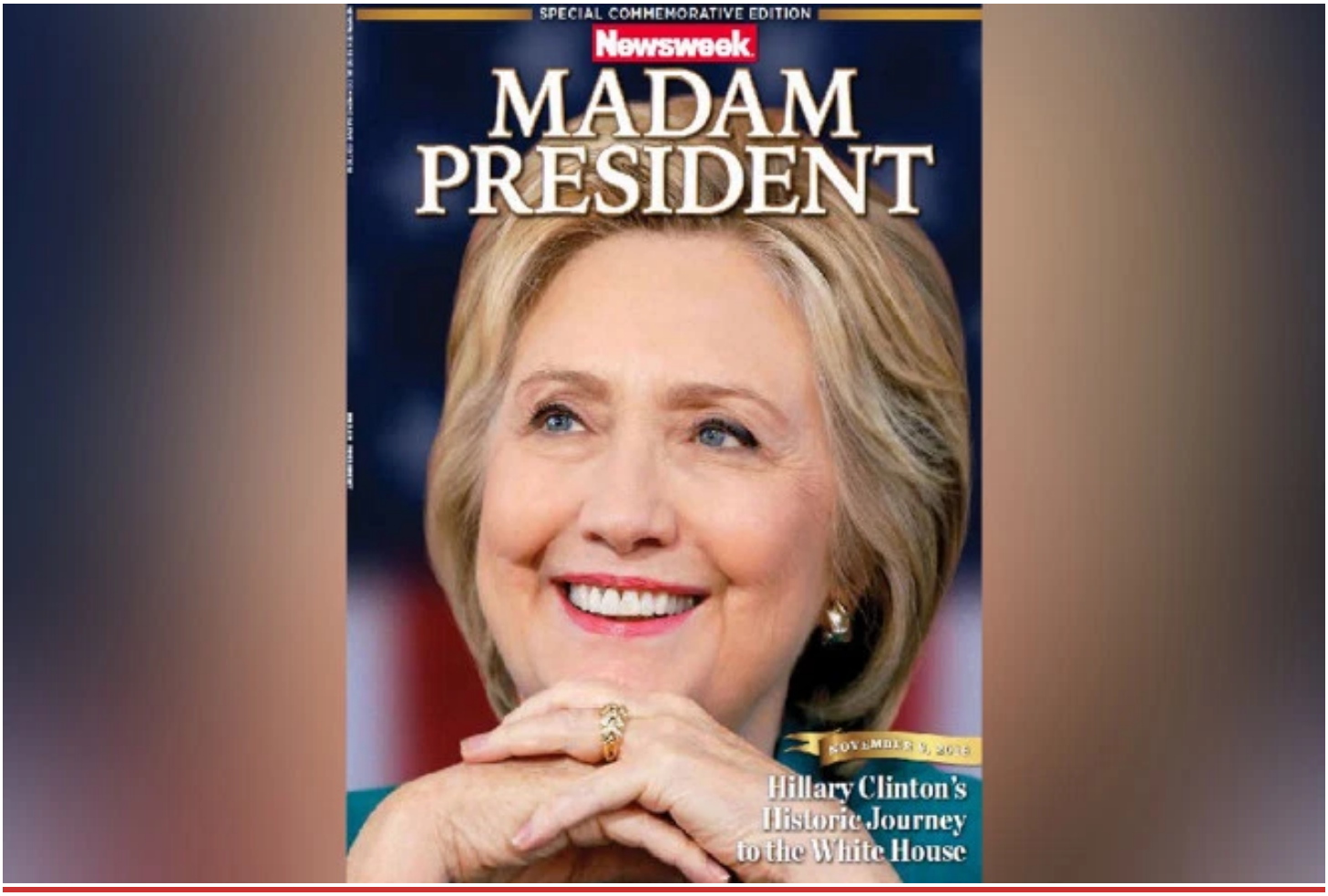
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MEDIA

Newsweek prints ‘Madam President’ issue before election even happens

By Keith J. Kelly

November 8, 2016 | 12:01am | Updated



Newsweek's special edition features Hillary Clinton as the winner of the US election.
Photo: Newsweek

Newsweek may have jumped the gun by printing a special edition featuring Hillary Clinton as the winner and sending it to stores before the election took place.

The third-party service that makes the magazine’s commemorative issues gave the green light to print the edition, which reads “Madam President.” It later hit the stands at a Barnes & Noble outlet.

“The polls show Hillary Clinton with a commanding lead, and a business decision was made to print the Clinton issue first while continuing to work on the Trump issue,” said the company’s CEO, Tony Romando.

Newsweek would destroy the remaining Clinton copies if Donald Trump wins.



Newsweek
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From the Editors: 2 special edition covers for 2016 election outcomes were produced by a

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WEIRD NEWS

Ninja Caught On Camera Stealing Katana Sword

Some say the thief isn't a very good ninja, since he was seen on camera.

11/14/2016 07:40 pm ET | **Updated** 12 hours ago

David Moye
Reporter, The Huffington Post

Ghostery blocked Vidible video player.

Police in Anchorage, Alaska, are asking for help in finding ... a ninja?

A person dressed head-to-toe in ninja gear broke into Bosco's, a comic book store, on Friday after it was closed, according to UPI.com.

The intruder slinked around the place before stealing a katana sword, a key part in any aspiring ninja's arsenal.

The break-in was caught on surveillance camera, but the ninja is still at large, according to staff member Eric Helmick.

Helmick told local station KTVA that he and other employees are still checking inventory.

"The sword was the only thing we could make out well enough on the video to say for sure" was stolen, he told the station.

The business released a surveillance video in hopes someone will recognize the ninja.

break in 11 11 16



TRENDING

Donald Trump's Transition Team, Or Lack Thereof, Is Causing Real Panic

There Is No Trump Pivot

Bernie Sanders Calls Out Donald Trump For Backpedaling On One Thing They Agreed On

Lindsey Graham Vows To Oppose Any Effort To Blow Up The Filibuster

Carrie Fisher Confesses To 'Intense' Affair With 'Star Wars' Co-Star Harrison Ford

The thief may have gotten away with the crime for now, but he may have proven himself to be a very bad ninja, since ninjas, by definition, aren't supposed to be seen.

Others griped about the ninja's skills at KTVA's Facebook page:

KTVA 11 News
on Saturday

So far, the katana appears to be the only thing stolen from Bosco's Comics Cards & Games.



'Ninja' burglarizes Spenard Bosco's, steals katana - KT...
ANCHORAGE — A person dressed as a ninja burglarized an Anchorage card sh...
KTVA.COM

40 28 148

Anyone who might know this ninja is asked to contact Anchorage police at 907-786-8900.

Here's one last look:



ANCHORAGE POLICE DEPT

Police in Anchorage are looking for this ninja who stole a sword from a comic book store Friday night

Also on HuffPost

Weapon Of Choice

Ninja Caught On Camera Stealing Katana Sword

Suggest a correction

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The Sky Is Falling! Or Maybe It's Dangerous Space Debris Over Southeast Asia

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H **Ninja Caught On Camera Stealing Katana Sword**

CONVERSATIONS

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Ninja Caught On Camera Stealing Katana Sword

Church Apologizes, Asks Forgiveness For Banning Fat People From Worship Team

foxnews.com

By ChristianPost.com

Published October 20, 2016



New Creation Church. (Google Street View)

An Oregon church which came under fire in recent weeks for instituting a ban on fat people as part of a slew of mandatory guidelines to be a part of the congregation's worship team, apologized for the ban on Saturday and begged forgiveness to anyone their rules may have offended.

"There has been some media circulating about our Worship Team Guidelines. Forgive us if we offended anyone. That certainly was not our intention. These guidelines have never been used to discriminate against anyone and have never been enforced," New Creation Church in Hillsboro declared in the terse apology posted on its website in reaction to the online backlash that ensued after details of their "Worship Team Guidelines" came under recent scrutiny.

"We want the worship team to look the best they can! Remember that the way we look is of utmost importance," the guidelines to would-be worship team members at the Oregon church warned in the document declaring "no excessive weight."

"We are the first thing the congregation sees. People do judge by appearance. We never get a second chance to make that first impression. Please be sure that your style and clothing bring honor and glory to God, isn't excessive and doesn't draw unnecessary attention to yourself," it added.

The document further made it clear that in order to be a part of the worship team, members must be in "100% agreement" with the guidelines to allow the anointing to flow and encouraged those with a weight issue to go shed the extra pounds at the gym.

"Since you are interested in this area of ministry we want you to be encouraged and know that our desire is to see you fulfill all God has called you to do and be. As a part of the worship team, we have specific guidelines that we have established for our team to work together and to be the best we can be," the church explained in the document. "Please read this carefully. You must be in 100% agreement for you to flow with our team and in order for the anointing to flow through you."

The apology comes after New Creation Church refused to comment on the guidelines when The Christian Post reached out for comment last week. Thousands who read the CP report hotly debated the wisdom of banning overweight worshipers and many disagreed with the exclusion of overweight worshipers.

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Norway will not give Halti Mount summit to Finland - BBC News

bbc.com

Norway has rejected a plan to give its neighbour Finland a mountain to mark the centenary of its independence.

A social media campaign had proposed giving Halti mountain summit to Finland for its 100th birthday next year.

The border between the two countries runs up the mountain near its peak.

But Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg said that sadly she had had to turn down the idea because the country's constitution prohibited any sacrifice of Norwegian territory.

Part of Halti mountain is already in Finland - and forms its current highest point - but the peak is 20m (66ft) across the border inside Norwegian territory.

Campaigners had proposed moving the border to give the summit, at 1,330m (4,363 ft), to Finland, saying the change would be barely visible on the map.

They had argued that the peak "would be a wonderful gift to our sister nation" to mark its independence from Russia, and not a big loss to mountainous Norway, which has much higher peaks.

The campaign's Facebook page got 17,000 likes, with support from both sides of the border.

But it hit upon an insurmountable legal issue.

"Border adjustments between countries raise challenging legal problems, among them linked to the Norwegian constitution," Ms Solberg wrote to Svein Leiros, the mayor of the town of Kaafjord in northern Norway, who supported the campaign.

Norway's 1814 constitution stipulates that the country is "indivisible" - and apparently not even an area the size of a football pitch can be split off.

"We will instead consider another suitable gift to Finland on its anniversary," the prime minister added.

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Not Holmes: America Detective Stories from a Century Ago

wordpress.com

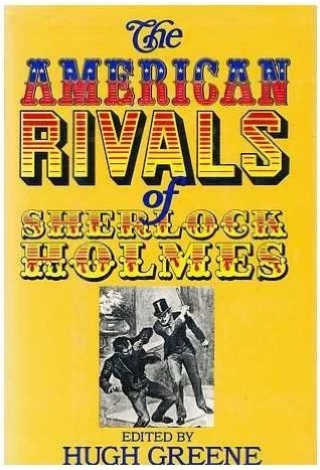
https://multoghost.wordpress.com/2016/10/15/not-holmes-america-detective-stories-from-a-century-ago/



Multo (Ghost)

Ghosts of story, myth, or anywhere else….

Posted on October 15, 2016by nzumel



American Rivals of Sherlock Holmes

Several years ago, at a wonderful, now gone bookstore called Outerlands, I found a collection called *The American Rivals of Sherlock Holmes*, edited by Hugh Greene (one-time Director-General of the BBC, journalist, and Graham Greene's brother). The book is one of a series of "Rivals of Sherlock Holmes" anthologies Greene edited in the 1970s. Most of the stories, as you would expect, are of the whodunit or puzzle variety.

What's especially interesting is the difference in subject matter between typical stories in the Holmesian style and these contemporaneous American offerings. British mystery stories from this period tend to be about interpersonal crime: crimes of passion, crimes over money or jewels, or jealousy. There is the occasional case of international espionage, but the criminals are almost always individual actors. Many of the stories in this collection are American transpositions of these classic themes, but others go beyond the personal to corporate or political crime.

Here's Greene:

> Sometimes one realizes with a sense of shock how modern these differences make them appear. We find a brutal and corrupt police force, corrupt politicians, bugging, big and wealthy corporations using their power to cheat the Federal Government or to put small competitors out of business, methods used by political parties in elections which are extraordinarily reminiscent of Nixon's CREEP.

Rereading these stories this past month, I found a particularly interesting theme running through several of these now century-old stories.

1. Big business routinely engage in corrupt practices for the sake of the bottom line.

2. When caught, only the little guys (those who implemented the crimes) get punished. The corporate officers, who instigated, or at least encouraged the crimes, get off lightly, or perhaps even completely.
3. That the big guys get off is wrong. But there are members of the Government — Senators, Federal Agents, and others — who are intent on making the big guys pay.

The first two points still sound awfully familiar, and far too topical, a century later. The last point, I fear, we no longer believe. Do these stories mean that we once trusted more in the State to protect the public's interest against big business? Or does it mean the opposite: were these stories escapist fantasy about the world we wished that we lived in?

> It is the strong hope of the country that there is justice and fairness and sane commonsense at the American bottom of us, if you can only get at it.

— Francis Lynde, "The Cloud-Bursters"

The American Rivals of Sherlock Holmes, is no longer in print, as far as I can tell, though I still see copies for sale on Amazon (in the U.S.). Most of the stories are probably in the public domain; after a century, really, all of them *should* be, but that's a topic for another post. Here are some of the stories that exemplify the uniquely American themes best.

"Cinderella's Slipper," Hugh C. Weir (From *Miss Madelyn Mack, Detective*, 1914)

The motive for the murder involves a Senator's investigations into "a certain great Trust," and evidence against it that would mean "annihilation of the monopoly, imprisonment for the chief officers…." Yes! Of course, The Trust will do anything to get that evidence.

This story is also notable for its female Holmes and Watson, a private detective and journalist, respectively. Other than being female, Madelyn Mack is a classic detective of the Holmes variety; her bluntness and disregard for social niceties reminds me of Benedict Cumberbatch's version of Holmes. She is treated with great respect, even deference. No one in the story raises an eyebrow at woman journalists and almost-rude woman detectives ordering people around and detecting, and except for one little plot point (a sort of experiment that Mack does), the detective isn't written much different from a man. This gender-neutrality is of course to be desired, in a perfect world, but feels surprising in a story from 1914. Weir's book *Miss Madelyn Mack, Detective* was dedicated to Mary Holland, apparently a real-life detective.

"Found Guilty," Josiah Flynt and Francis Walton (From *Powers that Prey*, 1900)

Not one of the better stories, and it's told in what Greene terms an "agonisingly facetious" voice that was supposedly popular in American writing at the time. It presents a grim picture of police brutality and corruption. The police in this story want to get their man — any man, and actual guilt or innocence is a technicality.

"The Man Higher Up," William MacHarg and Edwin Balmer (From *The Adventures of Luther Trant*, 1910)

An investigator from the Customs Department and psychologist Luther Trant team up to bust a large import company that's cheating the government of import duties — and willing to murder to protect their scam. As the title suggests, our heroes won't be content with just busting the company

employees who commit the import fraud; they want to take down the president of the company himself.

> To-day the enemies are the big, corrupting, thieving corporations like this company; and appreciating that, I am not ashamed to be a spy in their ranks, commissioned by the Government to catch and condemn President Welter, and any other officers involved with him, for systematically stealing from the Government for the past ten years [and possible murder to hide their crimes].

Features the "plethysmograph" and the "pneumograph," instruments that measure and record physiological/emotional reactions to various physical stimuli — in other words, guilt detectors. One doubts that the evidence would be admissible in court, but it's a cool gimmick.

"The Cloud-Bursters," Francis Lynde (From *Scientific Sprague*, 1912)

A large New York railway concern is trying to undermine the Nevada Short Line, a small local railway, in order to take over the region. Again, the big guys have sent in a fixer to do their dirty work.

> 'Still, I can't believe that these New York stock pirates would authorise any such murderous thing as this!'
>
> 'Authorise murder or violence? Of course not; big business never does that. What it does is to put a man into the field, telling him in general terms the end that is to be accomplished. The head pushers would turn blue under their finger-nails if you'd charge them with murder.'

The New York consortium's latest scheme is to wash the Short Line's tracks out in an induced flash flood. To the rescue comes Calvin Sprague, AKA Scientific Sprague, a Department of Agriculture chemist and soil expert. What his official function is in the region isn't specified; he seems to be taking up Nevada Short Line's cause mostly as a matter of his sense of justice, and his friendship with Nevada Short Line's president.

Lynde must have really believed in the goodness "at the American bottom of us." The officers of the local companies are scrupulously ethical; his journalists seek the truth but won't fall into "yellow journalism;" even his bad guy goes out of his way not to harm innocent lives. But the theme here is the same as that of "The Man Higher Up": corporations will look the other way from all kinds of skullduggery for the bottom line.

"The Campaign Grafter," Arthur B. Reeve (From *The Poisoned Pen*, 1913)

Someone tries to blackmail Wesley Travis, an idealistic reform candidate for statewide office, with photos allegedly showing him on friendly terms with the corrupt heads of the current party in power — the party that Travis is running against. If Travis doesn't pay, the blackmailer will release the photos to the press the Monday before the election. But if Travis does pay, it looks like he's admitting guilt. What to do?

Features doctored photos, campaign finance issues, probable voter fraud, and an early version of modern data-driven, media-centered campaign management. The head of Travis's press bureau could be a prototype for Gloria Steinem: a wealthy society girl turned journalist and suffragette (the

19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote nationwide, wasn't ratified until 1920). On the detective side: forensic photography and some strategic bugging. Fun stuff.

"The Frame-up," Richard Harding Davis (From *Somewhere in France*, 1915)

Another story about entrapment and corrupt politics; on the one side Tammany Hall and on the other side an ambitious District Attorney and his wealthy, also politically powerful brother-in-law. What will the District Attorney do to protect his brother-in-law from a sex scandal? Also features bugging. I liked the ending of this one.

In addition to these, the more "classic" detective stories were mostly amusing, too. There are of course other (later) American variations on this genre, from Ellery Queen and John Dickson Carr on the more "Britishy" end, to Rex Stout and the TV show *Columbo* on the more American end. It's still a treat to see these earlier, Sherlock Holmes-era variations as well.

From a literary point of view, many of these stories feel more "pulpy" than what you would expect in a British detective story of the era. They're still enjoyable, and if you're interested in exploring the difference between the classic English detective story and its American counterparts, I recommend you pick up a copy, or try to hunt down some of the source volumes I mention above.

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The Notorious Patty Cannon.



A compendium of information, resources and discussion on notable nineteenth century American murders.

Saturday, December 14, 2013

The Notorious Patty Cannon.



Joe Johnson's Tavern

Patty Cannon was, by all accounts, among the most barbarous and amoral women in American history. In antebellum Delaware, Patty Cannon led a gang who kidnapped free blacks and sold them into slavery further south. She would indiscriminately murder any man, woman or child—including her own husband and baby— who stood in her way. An1841 murder pamphlet sums it up, “And we can truly say, that we have never seen recorded, a greater instance of moral depravity, so perfectly regardless of every feeling, which should inhabit the human breast.”

Date: 1820s

Location: Sussex County, Delaware

Victim: At least 4 people

Cause of Death: Stabbing, shooting, burning

Accused: Patty (aka Martha, aka Lucretia) Cannon

Synopsis:

According to the pamphlet *Narrative and confessions of Lucretia P. Cannon*, published in 1841, Patty Cannon’s father, L. P. Hanly, was the son of an English nobleman who disowned him after L. P. took to drink and secretly married a prostitute. With nothing left for them in England, Hanly and his wife traveled to Montreal where they set up a smuggling operation between Montreal and towns in New York and Vermont. The Hanlys lived a double life, prospering on illegal activities while giving

the appearance of a respectable family. All was well until acquaintance named Alexander Payne uncovered their operation and threatened to turn them in. Hanly decided that it was necessary kill Payne, but he was only partially successful—he split Payne's head with an axe but was captured before he could escape. He was hanged soon after.

With her husband gone, Mrs. Hanly returned to her old occupation, opening "a house of entertainment for persons travelling for pleasure." As her mother had done for her, Mrs. Hanly taught her daughters the arts of deception and as soon as she could, married them off to men of respectability.

Her youngest daughter, Lucretia, better known as Patty, was sixteen years old when she married Jesse Cannon (called Alonzo Cannon in the pamphlet), a wheelwright from Delaware, who had taken sick during his visit to the Northcountry. Mrs. Hanly, having ascertained that Cannon was wealthy, nursed him back to health and encouraged a blossoming relationship between Cannon and her daughter. Upon his recovery Mrs. Hanly convinced Cannon to marry Patty and take her with him to Delaware.

They settled down on the Nanticoke River, near the Maryland boarder, and had two children. But it wasn't long before Patty's evil character emerged and Cannon's health began to fail again. Within three years Cannon was dead. Many supposed he had died of grief over an unpleasant marriage, but Patty would later confess that she had slowly poisoned him.



Without the fetters of a husband, Patty went wild. She gathered a group of ruffians who were perfectly obedient to her will, and began a career in robbery. Some time later, Patty and her son-in-law, Joe Johnson, built a house and set up a tavern there, known as "Joe Johnson's Tavern." Allegedly, the building straddled the border between Delaware and Maryland so that if authorities entered, she only had to walk a few steps to be in another jurisdiction.

When travelers stopped at the tavern, Patty sized them up and if they had anything worth stealing she would shoot or stab them and bury the bodies in the yard. If it was not convenient to kill them on site, she would let them leave, then dressed as a man, she would lead her gang to hijack and murder the travelers on the highway. Her men would later say that Patty had her own graveyard.

Delaware was unique before the Civil War, because although it was a slave state, in 1830 only 4% of its population were slaves; 20% of its population were free blacks. This made Delaware an attractive destination for runaway slaves but it was also dangerous for freed slaves who might be kidnapped and sold back into slavery. This was the business that ultimately attracted Patty Cannon; kidnapping freed slaves was lucrative and all but risk free.


Lucretia P. Cannon and her gang firing at the Slave Dealers.—Page 13.

The gang bought a sailing ship to transfer their captives and recruited some black members to help in the work. A black man named Ransom would travel through the city mingling with the free black population, and entice men onto the ship. Once the men were aboard and below decks, the hatches would be secured and the men chained. The ship would travel south where the kidnapped freemen would be sold into slavery.

They also worked with a brothel keeper who could supply Patty with black women as well as men. If the women had children, and they were acceptable, they would be sold too. If the children caused trouble they were murdered and buried in a cave in the basement of the tavern.

One famous example of Patty Cannon's cruelty involved a five-year-old child who was subject to fits. During one of the child's fits, the screaming so angered Patty that she grabbed the child and started beating it. When the screaming continued, Patty held the child's head over a hot fire, burning its face to a cinder.

Patty's murderous career ended after a traveler who stopped at the tavern for the night and was robbed and killed. When he did not arrive at his destination, suspicions were aroused. While the neighbors were investigating, one of the gang members privately told them there was something awful in the cellar. They took the information to the sheriff who went to the house the following day with a warrant and a dozen armed men.

In the attic the sheriff found twenty-one people in chains, awaiting transport to the slave market. They were immediately freed. Patty and all the members of the gang were arrested and taken to Georgetown, Deleware to be tried. One member of the gang turned state's evidence and told the police where the bodies were buried.

Patty and two of her accomplices were convicted of murder and sentenced to hang. Three others were convicted as accessories and each was sentenced to four years in prison.

Another version of this story says that the murder of the traveler was not solved until fourteen years later when a field was being plowed and his shallow grave uncovered. After this discovery, Patty was betrayed by a member of her gang.

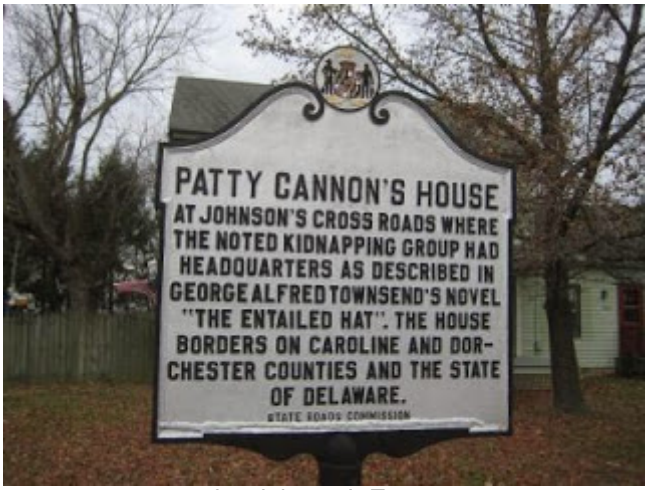
In fact, there is no evidence that Patty Cannon was ever tried for anything. Joseph Johnson was tried for taking a free black man from Delaware to Maryland, but he is the only member of the gang that was ever brought to court. In 1821 an indictment for kidnapping was issued against Joseph Johnson, Mary Johnson, Jesse Cannon, Jesse Cannon Jr., John Stevenson, and Martha Cannon. It is presumed that Martha Cannon was actually Patty Cannon.

An indictment, dated April 13, 1829 charged Patty Cannon with the murder of three infants, seven years prior that time. In another indictment of the same date, she is charged with being an accessory to the murder of a boy. She was probably arrested and jailed on these charges.

Aftermath:

All sources seem to be in agreement that Patty Cannon committed suicide in prison. *Narrative and confessions of Lucretia P. Cannon*, which claims that Patty was convicted of murder and awaiting execution when she took poison, gives a vivid description of her death.

About three weeks before her scheduled execution, the pamphlet states, Patty Cannon obtained some poison in prison. She killed herself to avoid a public execution, the fate that had befallen her father. The poison had a terrible effect; before she died she would alternate between raging fits and remorseful depression. During the fits she would rip her clothes off, tear her hair, destroying everything in her reach, and "cursing God and the hour that gave her birth." It took three men to keep her on her bed. In her calmer moments she would cry bitterly and reproach herself for the awful crimes she had committed, then the rage would start again. During a calm moment, about an hour before her death, Patty asked for a priest so she could make her confession. She confessed that she had killed eleven people with her own hands and was an accessory to the murder of more than a dozen others. She also admitted to poisoning her husband and strangling one of her own children when only three days old. Then Patty was seized by another fit of despair, she sank back on her pillow and died.



Joe Johnson's Tavern

An historical marker in Reliance, Maryland identifies the location of Patty Cannon's headquarters. However the PBS television show "History Detectives" has determined that the house standing there now is not the original Joe Johnson's Tavern. They proved that Patty Cannon had owned the property, but the original building was torn down in 1948.

This fact is indicative of the confusion surrounding the story of Patty Cannon (aka Lucretia P. Cannon, aka Martha Cannon.) The murder pamphlet *Narrative and confessions of Lucretia P. Cannon* is the source of much anecdotal evidence on Patty Cannon, but it is sparse on hard facts, such as names of victims and dates of events. It is impossible at this point to know how much of its material is true. Another source adding to the mythology of Patty Cannon is the novel *The Entailed Hat; Or, Patty Cannon's Times* by George Alfred Townsend, published in 1884. It was not used in preparing this account.

Following her death, the skull of Patty Cannon was given to the phrenologist, O. S. Fowler, for study. He used Patty and her sister Betsey (who was also depraved and prone to violence) to illustrate his theory of "Heredity Descent" stating that the sisters had "inherited both the destructive propensity of their father, and the sexual passion of their mother."

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Posted by Robert Wilhelm

5 comments :

The Greenockian says:
December 14, 2013 at 10:21 AM

> What a horrible woman!
> Liz

DecayingAngel says:
December 15, 2013 at 10:28 AM

> What a movie this would make!

Cassandra Troy says:
July 13, 2015 at 10:34 AM

> Though rare there are and have been women capable of unspeakable horrors. Deliberate cruelty is unforgivable and our own nation, built on genocide and slavery, is currently engaged in wanton crimes against humanity. And, so it goes...

Unknown says:
September 16, 2016 at 10:46 PM

> That's crazy

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Novel written in single unbroken sentence wins U.K. Goldsmiths Prize

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Nov. 10, 2016 at 12:42 PM
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LONDON, Nov. 10 (UPI) -- An Irish writer won the Goldsmiths Prize literary award for his novel written in a single unbroken sentence.

Mike McCormack won the $12,530 award granted by Goldsmiths, University of London for his novel *Solar Bones*.

"Set over a few hours in a single day, and told in the first-person voice of a middle-aged engineer, Mike McCormack's *Solar Bones* transcends these seeming limits magnificently," Chair of Judges Professor Blake Morrison said.

McCormack became the third Irish writer to claim the Goldsmiths Prize since its inception in 2013 and said the win served as "payback" for the publishers and agent who supported him throughout his career.

"It's about time the prize-giving community honoured experimental works and time that mainstream publishers started honouring their readership by saying: 'Here are experimental books,'" McCormack said.

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Nowhere to mooove: 3 cows stranded by New Zealand earthquake

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 13, 2016

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Three New Zealand cows looked like they could use a little help Monday after an earthquake triggered landslides all around them and left them stranded on a small island of grass.

Video taken by Newshub news service from a helicopter near the small town of Kaikoura shows two adult cattle and a calf stuck on a chunk of land in a paddock that had been ripped apart in Monday's magnitude-7.8 quake. The patch of grass was surrounded by deep ravines of collapsed earth, trapping the animals where they stood.

It was not immediately clear who owned the cattle or what was being done to help them.

Kaikoura is close to the epicenter of the overnight earthquake, and where one of the two confirmed deaths occurred. The quake was strongly felt to the south in Christchurch but was far less damaging than a smaller 2011 earthquake that devastated the city and killed 185 people.

New Zealand's 10 million cattle easily outnumber its 4.7 million people.

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Podesta urged to involve Obama in extraterrestrial disclosure meeting, emails reveal rt.com

01:38 GMT, Oct 22, 2016
Published time: 20 Oct, 2016 22:42Edited time: 21 Oct, 2016 07:12
John Podesta arranged a meeting with astronaut Edgar Mitchell to discuss the US government disclosing information to the public on aliens, according to emails leaked by WikiLeaks. The meeting was described as a prelude to involving President Barack Obama in the discussion.

"Our government is still operating from outdated beliefs and policies" Mitchell wrote in the email from 2014, in which he requested *"a conversation with you and President Obama regarding the next steps in extraterrestrial disclosure for the benefit of our country and our planet."*

Mitchell, the sixth man to walk on the moon, said the information needed to be disclosed to allow humans to achieve *"planet sustainability generation energies,"* as well exploring the cosmos without reverting to *"colonialism and destruction"* and as a way for the government to respectfully regard *"the wisdom and intellect of its citizens as we move into space."*

In the email, Mitchell claimed that the US government made a conscious decision 50 years ago to *"remove knowledge of the extraterrestrial presence from the citizens of our country."* This decision is no longer relevant, according to Mitchell, who said it is detrimental to *"science, religion, and responsible citizenry."*

Podesta's assistant, Eryn Sepp, accepted the invitation, but said, *"John would likely take this meeting alone first before involving the President."*

The former astronaut, who died earlier in 2016, had communicated with Podesta via email before, warning him of an impending space war as well as Vatican knowledge of extraterrestrials.

Podesta, who is heading Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, is known for his UFO fervor stating earlier this year that he had convinced Clinton to declassify UFO files if she takes power. In 2002, he openly advocated for the public release of documents on Area 51.

In the latest batch of emails released by WikiLeaks, Podesta was asked by author and Apollo museum curator Robert Fish to discuss how *"hard scientific data*" can be collected on UFOs.

"Based on significant personal experience, I can attest that UFO hunters are looking in the wrong places." Fish told Podesta in the 2015 mail.

Podesta declined to meet with Fish, but said he will keep his contact information.

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RT.com

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Obscure election decides how to spend money from 1824 will

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press October 28, 2016

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — An election that few residents of a Rhode Island city knew about has decided who controls a fund that traces back to an early 19th-century philanthropist.

WPRI-TV reports (http://bit.ly/2ff4t2E) 238 of Providence's 180,000 residents cast ballots Thursday during the brief election at City Hall. Many city employees voted.

The Dexter Donation Trust Fund holds $2.2 million and distributes a portion of the money each year to nonprofit organizations. It's named after Ebenezer Knight Dexter, a businessman who died in 1824.

Dexter's will turned his Providence farm into an almshouse for the poor. Proceeds from selling the property to Brown University in the 1950s created the trust fund, which is run by an elected board.

A slate of candidates endorsed by Democratic Mayor Jorge Elorza (HOR'-hay ay-LOR'-sah) beat two other factions to win board seats.

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'Lord of the Rings' obsession leads to botched plastic surgery

nypost.com

By Olivia Lambert, News.com.au

October 14, 2016 11:02am

A woman wanted elfin ears (left) but said a botched cosmetic procedure left hers deformed. Photo: Handout

Originally Published By:

news.com.au
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An Australian woman wanting to look like a character from "Lord of the Rings" ended up resembling a mutant bat after a botched cosmetic procedure.

She had a desire for pixie ears and after an operation to mutilate herself to receive the sci-fi look, she realized it was a huge mistake.

Her ear was left with horrific scar tissue and the top of the ear had lost its shell-like appearance and was bent out of shape by a body modification clinic.

She's now suing Piercing HQ, which allegedly conducted the procedure, for damages. She told the Herald Sun she had tattoos and piercings before and wanted more work done, but it didn't turn out as she hoped.

"For two years, I have suffered complications, pain and discomfort," she said. "I'm devastated at what's happened and I don't want anyone else to have to go through the same thing."

The woman, from Cranbourne in Melbourne's southeast, will now need plastic surgery to rectify the damage caused to her ear.

Not only has her ear been disfigured, she has suffered from sensitivity, chronic pain, anxiety and depression.



The woman wanted pixie ears like Cate Blanchett's character Galadriel in "Lord of the Rings." Photo: New Line Cinema

Modal Trigger

Piercing HQ manager Louise Hickman denied being responsible for the botched ear job and told the Herald Sun the woman was never a client of the business.

The woman allegedly had consultations with Hugh Mattey, who has since died. The patient claimed Mattey was contracted by Piercing HQ to perform the procedure.

Despite this being a risky operation, this woman is not the only one with a penchant for the bizarre.

Two years ago, a Japanese porn star was ridiculed for undergoing surgery to look like a pixie.

Rina Nanase was compared to Dobby, the elf from the "Harry Potter" films.

She had operations to thin down her cheeks, sharpen her chin, lengthen her nose and enlarge her eyes.

Dennis Avner was another who underwent radical body modifications to look like a tiger.

He had overgrown fingernails, fangs and striped skin.

His upper lip was split and his ears were surgically pointed, and he had silicone cheek and forehead implants.

Some people also have made bizarre surgery requests to Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons vice president Dr. Gazi Hussain.

He told news.com.au odd operations were not common, but he has been asked to reshape ears while a colleague was asked to construct a nose like a Klingon from "Star Trek."

"We would want to delve more deeply into the motivation into these requests and what their realistic expectations are," Hussain said.

With the more unusual requests, Hussain said, there was a higher risk of things going wrong and the outcome being less than desirable.

"It's much more difficult to try and correct things once you have surgery," he said. "It has permanent ramifications and it's not always possible to go back to what you had before."

Hussain said some people did not take plastic surgery seriously and thought it could be easily reversed, but a botched surgery can cause lifelong damage.

Cosmetic surgery could be dangerous if the person performing the procedure was not highly trained.

Hussain said there also was a concern people were performing procedures in back rooms rather than in safe, accredited clinics.

With these more bizarre procedures, infections become more likely and Hussain said they could lead to the destruction of cartilage.

"Infections can also lead to cauliflower ears, which are caused by trauma and irreversible damage to the cartilage," Hussain said.

"It can lead to the destruction of the ear and permanent deformities."

Hussain said bizarre cosmetic surgeries were usually due to fads and movies like "Lord of the Rings."

"These elfin characters on the face of it look very glamorous and it might be something that appeals to an older teenager or young adult," he said.

"In 20 years' time, they might want to get their procedures re-corrected, but it's not always possible.

"It's a bit of a cliche, but think really carefully before you make over anything at all. Circumstances and opinions of what you find attractive may change."

An operation to achieve the pixie ear look is quite painful and not just a case of cutting and reshaping skin.

The cartilage is the framework for the entire ear, and Hussain said the operation involved cutting and screwing of cartilage.

Some plastic surgeons even put permanent stitches in the ear to keep the desired shape.

"These are not standard procedures and to a certain extent they haven't been tested, so you don't know what the long-term result of these operations are," he said.

People wanting an unusual procedure should ask their practitioner to see previous results.

"It's nice to know how many of these unusual operations a practitioner has done," Hussain said.

"Ask if it's possible to speak to previous patients to get a better sense of the realistic result.

"If you're unable to see examples of previous work, the concern is, are you the first person having it done and do you really want to be a guinea pig?"

Hussain said people should take cosmetic surgery as seriously as other surgeries.

"The same consideration should be given to cosmetic surgery that you would give to something like a hip replacement," he said.

This article originally appeared on News.com.au.

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Oklahoma votes to make beer great again

marketwatch.com

By Jason Notte

Published: Nov 10, 2016 11:24 a.m. ET



Courtesy Everett Collection
Men enjoying 3.2% beer on the 4th of July in 1933 in Bangor, Maine.

By

JasonNotte

Oklahoma moved the nation a step further from Prohibition by voting to do away with one of its saddest relics: Low-alcohol beer.

Roughly 66% of Oklahoma voters who went to the polls on Tuesday elected to allow grocery stores to carry full-strength wine and beer. The change isn't slated to take place until October 2018, but that should give retailers and brewers enough time to clear out stock of the 3.2%-alcohol-by-weight (4% alcohol by volume) beer they were forced to sell under state law and acclimate customers to what qualifies as "normal" in most of the rest of the world.

Most mass-market beers have about 5% alcohol, with light beers coming in around 4.5% and many craft beers styles topping 7%.

That one vote helps Oklahoma leap 83 years into the present and may spell the end of mandated low-alcohol beer sales elsewhere in the U.S. On March 22, 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt used the Cullen-Harrison Act to overturn the Volstead Act that prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages. However, he used 3.2% beer as a stopgap measure until the 21st Amendment repealing Prohibition was passed in December of the same year.

Oklahoma needed some time to wrap its mind around the concept of full-strength beer. The state didn't get around to formally repealing Prohibition until 1959. In fact, you couldn't get liquor served to you as a single drink in a bar or nightclub until 1984. Throughout much of that time, full-strength beer could only be sold in liquor stores and wasn't even approved for refrigeration by store owners until last year. Even then, liquor store owners won't be able to sell a full-strength beer cold until October 2018.

This created a somewhat uncomfortable environment for both selling and brewing beer. At the end of 2015, Oklahoma had just 14 breweries within its borders. That total put Oklahoma's brewery total 46th in the nation, while the 0.5 breweries it had for every 100,000 adults ranked dead last in the U.S., according to the Brewers Association craft beer industry group.

One of those breweries, Krebs, Okla.-based Choc Beer Co., formed a completely different brand — Born Free Beer Co. — just to create low-point beers. While larger brewers like New Belgium brew low-point versions of their popular styles, Choc President Zach Prichard told The Oklahoman that the vast majority "aren't very good" and are "are a lowered-ABV version on an existing style or recipe."

"If the brewers didn't have to brew the beers to 3.2, they wouldn't," he said.

Increasingly, they don't.

Earlier this year, Colorado — which is home to the Brewers Association, the American Homebrewers Association, Molson Coors TAP, -0.61% and nearly 300 breweries — finally got around to passing a law that will allow grocery stores to stop selling 3.2% ABV beer and stock full-strength beer. It's going to take 20 years to

phase in the change (after it failed to get on the ballot for 2016) and required significant revision of the state's liquor licensing, but it's happening.

That leaves just Utah, Minnesota and Kansas forcing grocers to peddle watered-down beer, but even those states aren't necessarily clinging to 1933 morés.

In Minnesota, where the average adult drinks five gallons of beer a year (11th in the country), there are permits to sell full-strength alcohol at stores, but they require far more effort to obtain than those for low-point beer. In Kansas, a group called Uncork Kansas is pushing to remove low-point beer and other alcohol restrictions that date back to 1881.

"The reality of manufacturers saying, 'We're not going to make 3.2 beer anymore' is very real," Uncork Kansas initiative spokesperson Jessica Lucas told The Norman Transcript last year. "It doesn't make good business sense to ship 3.2 beer to Utah, Kansas and Minnesota … The market is collapsing and will collapse with the vote in Oklahoma."

Even in Utah, where full-strength beer is only allowed to be sold at liquor and packaged-goods stores and at bars and restaurants with liquor licenses, there is a movement to ease low-point beer restrictions. The state now has more than 20 breweries of its own and, despite its beer restrictions, consumes three gallons of beer per adult each year (good for 14th in the nation). Utah Beer Wholesalers Association President Jim Olsen told FOX13 News in Salt Lake City that low-point beer only accounts for 1.8% of all beer brewed in the U.S., with Colorado and Oklahoma accounting for 60% of that total.

"I've been told by representatives from the larger breweries they're going to have to take a serious look at [low-point] beer to determine it's still worth their time and effort," Olsen said.

While Utah representatives say they'll address the issue, they've also made it clear that they're waiting until Colorado and Oklahoma laws take effect in 2018. While opponents of full-strength beer sales in Oklahoma cite religious objections and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendement as potential obstacles to its widespread embrace, the fact that just five states are left grappling with this issue — and that there's still an option for dry counties and municipalities — suggests change is inevitable.

If state legislators don't drag beer laws out of the early 20th century, voters might have to.

MarketWatch

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The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster

Press

The Encyclopedia of Louisville
James D. Kendall (Edited by John E. Kleber)
The University Press of Kentucky / 2001

Pope Lick Monster. A half-man, half-goat creature has been rumored to live under the Norfolk Southern Railroad trestle across Pop Lick Creek and S Pope Lick Rd. near Fisherville in eastern Jefferson County. Stories of encounters have abounded for more than three generations and have served as the mood-setter for multiple romantic encounters between teenage boys and girls, many involving alcohol and tests of "bravery" that require climbing onto the trestle. According to the legend, the creature hypnotizes trespassers into venturing out onto the trestle, thus luring them to their death before an oncoming train. Several people have been killed either on the trestle or by falling from it, and many more have been injured.

A 1988 film, The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster, by local independent producer Ron Schildknecht visualizes the fictional story of teens who venture into the goat-man's domain. The sixteen-minute film recounts the experience of growing up in 1980s Louisville. In it, three teens - brother and sister Ben and Katie and their friend Clancy - acquire a six-pack of beer and head to Pope Lick Rd. intent on testing their bravery. Ben ventures onto the trestle to drink the ceremonial beer and is hypnotized by the goat-man, only to be shaken sensible by the rumble of an oncoming train. Ben is forced to cling by his fingertips to the edge of the trestle as the train whistles by, then safely climbs back up. The goat-man has struck again. (p. 713)

The Monster at Pope Lick
Steve Rush
The New Voice / October 31,1990

Nobody knows when the quiet, rural area beyond Jeffersontown first became home to the community's strangest, and definitely scariest, resident – the Pope Lick Monster.

But tales of the creature, also known as the Sheepman, have circulated for decades in eastern Jefferson County, and as Halloween night approaches, rumors of the beast again seem to be common.

"It's always been around J-town," said Michael Zettler, a 1985 graduate of J-town High School. "It was always talked about, especially around Halloween."

"I first heard of it in the early 1960's," said Mary Ruckriegel, the wife of J-town Mayor Daniel Ruckriegel. "When I started dating Dan, the kids were always talking about it, especially during Halloween. I don't know if it was a figment of someone's imagination or what."

"I can remember hearing stories of the thing when I was 4 or 5 years old," said

Rod Whitenack, a J-town native now in his early 20's. "Every time Halloween would roll around, discussion about the monster would start up."


The monster at
Pope Lick

Illustration by Jerome Neukirch

There are probably as many residents of J-town as there are descriptions of the "thing" that supposedly lives below the rusty train trestle that passes over Pope Lick Road and Pope Lick Creek out Taylorsville Road near Fisherville.

Most describe the monster as a scary half-man, half-sheep, who terrorizes anyone who dares enter his domain. They say he has the features of both man and sheep, with horns, an ugly snout and a hairy brown body. He walks upright, has hooves for feet and can run at high speeds, enabling him to catch anyone in his territory.

Some say it is Jefferson County's version of Ichabod Crane's nightmare – a headless horseman-type monster who rides the tracks and kills anyone who crosses his path.

Others say it's not a monster at all; it's an old chemist who became a recluse after a chemical explosion in his lab terribly disfigured his face.

Others say it's just a hermit who lived in a nearby shack and would scare away anyone who came near the trestle.

Still others say the figure that purportedly wanders the area is the deformed son of a local farmer, so hideous he won't show his face until nighttime.

But whatever the description, the J-town monster has several similarities with other world-famous beasts. Like the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot, actual sightings of the Pope Lick Monster have been few and far between, if at all.

"There was always some guy who said he saw something out there." Said Whitenack, who said he made many trips to the trestle. "But I never did."

And like the Swamp Thing and the Creature from the Black Lagoon, the J-town monster has even been the focus of his own local flick, titles "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," which premiered in Louisville in the fall of 1988. The 16-minute, black-and-white movie has been shown at the Vogue, The Uptown and, most recently, at the Water Tower, and been well received by area fans.

"I was looking for a Story indigenous to the area," said the film's director and producer local independent filmmaker Ron Schildknecht. "And the Sheepman is something only told around here; it's been around at least three generations."

Before he began filming, Schildknecht put in nearly a year of research o the subject. "I talked to 50 people formally and probably 100 more informally getting as much information as I could," he said. "Was he half-man, half-sheep?" Did he walk on all fours or on two legs? Did he murder people or was he tame? I found a lot of interpretations; it was all real scattered out."

Half the apparent appeal has been the imposing train trestle, which has stood overlooking the area since 1929. The trestle, which is still used regularly today, spans nearly 800 feet and is about 100 feet tall.

Over the years, teen-agers have been known to frequent the location in search of a remote spot where they could party without being bothered by police or parents.

"The trestles were a real popular place to go and drink and get rowdy," Schildknecht said. "The talk of the a monster makes it much more attractive to go out there."

"It was part of a senior tradition," Ruckriegel said. "They would go out there to see if they could see it; it was a sign of bravery."

"The boys would take the girls out there to try to scare them," she added. "It was something really scary."

While the site may have provided fun for some, tragedy has also come to many who have walked the tracks. In recent years, several youths have been killed, whether from falling from the trestle or after being caught on the tracks and hit by a train.

"It's unfortunate," Schildknecht said. "The story of the monster seems so harmless and innocent, except for the real danger of the railroad."

About a year ago train officials put up a chain link fence with barbed wire to keep thrill-seekers from climbing to the tracks.

But that hasn't stopped the rumors about the monster.

When the 32-year-old Schildknecht went there to film the movie, he didn't see the beast but admitted even he found the place a little frightening. "It's kinda eerie," he said, "knowing the history and that people have been killed out there."

"I didn't feel anything supernatural," he said. "I was just more intrigued with the ambiance of the trestle. And it's pretty intense when a train goes by."

Also finding the area spooky was Zettler, one of the high schoolers who with a couple of friends made the trek to the monster's purported stomping ground.

"It was real scary." He said. "Even though you know the legend is silly, you still think about it."

As long as the legend has been told, no one knows for sure how it started.

"I've often wondered if it was a Halloween prank," Ruckriegel said, "and then got blown out of proportion."

"It probably started as a man walking his goat," Zettler said. "It's just a bunch of stories. It's something you hear through the years."

And the legend still exists in the East-End community today, but only to a degree.

"I think a lot of the kids today are too smart to believe all that stuff," Ruckriegel said. "But I guess it's still going around."



The area's resident beast, as he appeared in the local movie, "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," supposedly terrorizes anyone who enters his domain below the imposing train trestle past Jeffersontown near Fisherville.

"The story is still being told," Schildknecht said. As long as there's a trestle out there and long as there are kids in high school, it's still alive."

The Pope Lick Monster exist in the collective imaginations of hundreds of people," he added, "which for me says he does exists."

(Photo Caption) The area's resident beast, as he appeared in the local movie, "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," supposedly terrorizes anyone who enters his domain below the imposing train trestle past Jeffersontown near Fisherville.

Ron Schildknecht and the Pope Lick Monster
Nicholas Korn
Visual Art Review / March/April 1989

The concept for Ron Schildknecht's film "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster" began with an attempt to combine several stories about a biologically impossible creature, a sheepman who haunts the region around Pope Lick Road. This teratogenous figure, a half-man, half-sheep, fathered on an unsuspecting ewe by a lewd and indiscriminate farmhand, is said to hypnotize young adventurers onto the railroad trestle as trains approach in the distance.

Sounding more like an adolescent prank than a verifiable report, it is not surprising that the local film maker found no documentation of any sort regarding the fable. The myth exists, not in the archives of libraries and newspaper registries, but in the excitable and credulous minds of students. Schildknecht first heard the story in high school and later learned the tale was not confined to his immediate circle of friends but enjoyed an extensive familiarity among teenagers in the region. No accounts of it exist in the annals of local folklore. The legend has spread by word of mouth, depending solely on hearsay to keep its tradition alive. That the account is based on such unreliable authority does not diminish its acceptance in the least. Strange tales never are measured by the facts but by their hold on the imagination.

"Most of the stories follow the same structure," explains Schildknecht. "There is always a newcomer and an initiator. It's one of those coming of age rituals, a dangerous admission to manhood. However, it's never the sheepman who really lures one onto the trestle, it's the initiator, the friend."



Photo by Janice Braverman

Nevertheless, in Schildknecht's film, the monster does appear and dazzles the eyes of a youth who has been taunted onto the track by his liquor swilling companion. The boy makes a narrow escape from an oncoming engine whose headlight shines as brightly as the sheepman's gaze. Whether the creature exists in the flesh or merely as a hallucination induced by the volatile mixture of alcohol and fear, the film refuses to answer. Schildknecht is more interested in presenting the legend than he is in explaining it away.

Schildknecht began shooting the film in April of 1986. After the first week, an unfortunate accident occurred. A young high school student fell from the ninety foot high trestle while kidding around with friends. He did not survive. Although Schildknecht had done thorough research on the history of the trestle, this was the first fatality he had heard of. It changed the shape and purpose of the film.

"Originally I was uncertain how the film should begin," explains the artist. "I had intended it to open with some kids leaving a ball game and going to the track, and was even considering an eerie prologue, with some dark shots of the trestle. After the accident, I felt more obligated to include some sort of warning

about the danger of the place. That's why I decided to start and close the film with monologues by Ben [the lead character] from an older, more adult perspective."

Despite these monitory efforts, Schildknecht has recently been the center of local controversy. Even before "The Pope Lick Monster" was given a public viewing at the Uptown Theater in December, Schildknecht received numerous calls from concerned mothers and wary railroad officials. Many felt that the film glamorized the danger of the trestle, and questioned whether Schildknecht's treatment of the myth would, like the sheepman, lure more teenagers to the tracks. It may be appropriate to mention that since the film went public, the authorities have properly fenced the area to discourage trespassing .

What Schildknecht, perhaps, did not expect was that the qualities which would make his film of interest would also provide a source of protest. To inspire suspense and tension, the film combines the allure of legend with the possibility of danger. The device of placing characters in perilous situations is as old as the art of storytelling itself. It may be true that a story cannot exist without it. However, had Schildknecht avoided the journalistic urge to render faithfully the locations of his tale, he might have been spared the scrutiny and outrage.

The artist's most recent project covers the last twenty-four hours of the White Castle restaurant which stood not long ago on the corner of Bardstown Road and Eastern Parkway. Working with a team of three photographers, Schildknecht captured the activities and comments of those present for the closing of what had become, for some, an institution. The work, however, remains unfinished. The necessary footage has been shot, but the film has not been processed due to lack of funds.

Independent film makers come few and far between; it's a slow, tedious, often financially unrewarding process. But Schildknecht has made a commitment to the medium, "I view myself as a storyteller," he says.

Film Brings Deadly Legend Alive
John Chattin
College Heights Herald / March 28, 1989

A half-man, half-sheep monster lured Ron Schildknecht to the Pope Lick train trestle in eastern Jefferson County – not to an early death like some area teenagers, but to complete a film about that confronts a legend, hidden behind the figure of a sheepman, that has turned harmful, sometimes fatal.

The 090-foot-high, 772-foot-long railroad bridge in the countryside near Louisville never attracted Schildknecht as a teenager. But six years after graduating from Western in 1980 with a communications major and film minor, he started shooting a film on the monster whose legend spans three generations.

However, some were concerned that Schildknecht’s film, not the sheepman’s legend, would attract teen-agers to test the trestle, a railroad track raised in the air by supports.

There were mention of lawsuits, legal responsibility, legality of filming and the addition of a warning statement to the film.

A 10-foot-high fence, put up shortly after the film’s premier, now guards the trestle which had been easily accessible; the trestle owners still consider the film a safety threat. And Schildknecht considers “The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster” representing the type of films he wants to make.

“The first death that I knew about happened one week after we started filming,” Schildknecht said.

“We started it (the film) in April 1986, and we shot about four or five days and got as much as we could,” he said. “And one week later a kid fell off and died three weeks later of multiple injuries.

“It gave me more of a reason why the film should be made.”

The trestle rises high over the small creek and moundy rises along one side of Pope Lick Road. The other side of the road climbs up an embankment to the trestle. The trestle and tracks are guarded by the new fence and a white sign with red letters, "Danger, Private Property Keep Off." Scattered around the site are beer cans and liquor bottles.

"Chipper" is scratched into a support and scrawled, spray paint messages—"Mary 1985," "JC I love and miss you," and more – are joined by spray-painted warnings, "go Away," Go Home, No Trespassing."

Because of concerns for safety and threats of lawsuits, Schildknecht screened his film, the day before the preview, for railroad officials and a mother who less than a year earlier had lost her son to the trestle.

"She told me that ever since he was killed on the trestle she had been trying to envision what he went through the last moments of his life," Schildknecht said. "And it wasn't until watching the film until she really understood how he felt before he died."

"I guess it's a compliment in a bizarre sense."

The fictional, dramatic film, "The Pope Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," tells of Clancy, a teen-ager, who is brought to the trestle by his friend, Ben, and is then attracted by the sheepman onto the tracks, where he escapes a train dangling from the trestle's edge.

Schildknecht's 16-minute film – costing about $6,000 most from his own pocket, and taking more than three years of off-and-on work to make because of the out-of-town actors and barriers to filming at the trestle – created its own monster.

Calls from railroad officials, lawyers and concerned parents deluged Schildknecht the day before the film's premier at a small Louisville theater, The Uptown, last December. The day after the showing to about 400 people, a large headline on an article about the movie on the front page of The Courier-Journal newspaper proclaimed, "Trestle of Death."

The trestle has its victims. Many are injured, some fatally. The last two deaths were in February, when a Spalding University student was killed by a train, and last May, when a 19-year-old died of injuries suffered a year earlier after jumping from a train on the trestle.

In its first five public showings, the premier and a subsequent four-night run at the same theater in January of this year, a warning statement of the dangers of trespassing on the trestle, given to Schildknecht by railroad officials, was read over the audio system. At a showing last Wednesday in Louisville no warning was read.

There was no mention of the showing in last Tuesday's or Thursday's editions of The Courier-Journal.

Unlike the Pope Lick film's gritty, black-and-White- brashness, Schildknecht, tall and with stray strands of gray streaming through his black hair, speaks slowly and thoroughly. But he flashes the same intensity as his filmmaking.

It's clear that Schildknecht, an artist-in-residence with the Louisville Visual Art Association for about two years, knows that railroad officials accuse him of coaxing teen-agers to the trestle. But he also knows his duties and goals as an artist and filmmaker.

"I see the film as bringing awareness to the community," Schildknecht said.

"I'm not saying this is what the railroad has and they should be responsible for keeping out kids," he said. "I'm just saying there is a legend that involves the trestle that is partly responsible for bringing kids out into the trestle."

Bob Auman, a spokesman in Roanoke, Va., for Norfolk Southern Corp., the owners of the railroad, said two teen-agers were arrested at the trestle the night Schildknecht's film was shown. After the film's

premier, the railroad company replaced a small chicken-wire fence, twisted and trampled, with a high, chain-link fence to bar entrance to the trestle.

"I don't think the showing of that film is in the best interest of safety on railroad crossings," Auman said.

"It wasn't my intention to force the railroad to take an action," Schildknecht said. "That was beyond any dream for them to do that. And I still don't really think that was necessary."

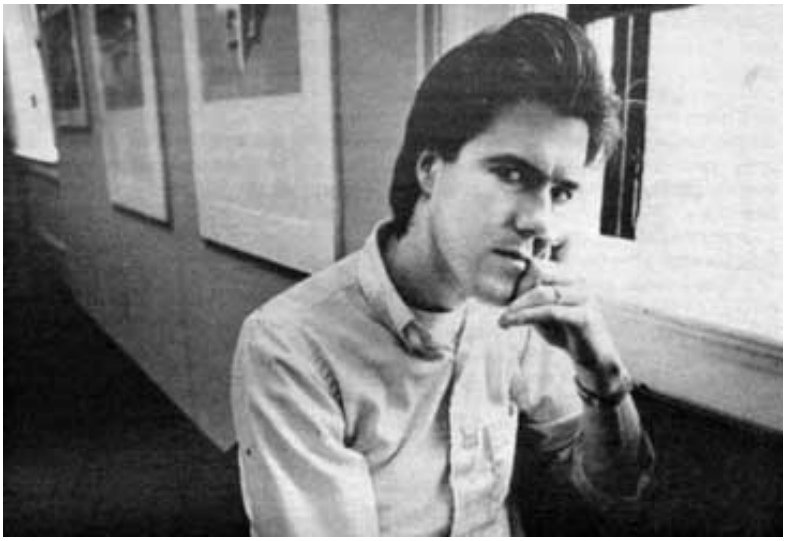


Photo by Andy Lyons

"Ron was simply doing what filmmakers do; he was simply reporting the legend," Dr. Ed Counts, coordinator of media production and Schildknecht's friend and former professor, said. "Ron didn't create the danger; he simply told about it."

Counts said Schildknecht's story-telling and filmmaking flair, apparent when Schildknecht began attending Western in 1977, has established Schildknecht as one of the up-and-coming, independent filmmakers in Kentucky.

"You can tell this is really his medium," Counts said. "He gets absorbed into a situation, but the seriousness and enthusiasm doesn't take away from him having fun."

"He's enthusiastic, creative, energetic, has a good sense of humor – and this shows up in his work."

Schildknecht worked on Count's film "Everyone Loves Stories" in 1983 after a graduate assistantship at East Texas State University and a film teaching position at an Elizabethton, Tenn., high school.

In the past two years Schildknecht has completed a short video on Martin Luther King Jr. for the Brown School in Louisville and a video which has appeared on MTV of the Louisville-based band, the Synthetics.

He also shot film footage of a Louisville White Castle restaurant closing, which triggered a rally of people who declared it the death of a neighborhood landmark and legend. He plans to put it into a dramatically stylized documentary.

Counts, who showed his film, "The Prank" at Schildknecht's film's premier, said the Pope Lick film's first showing captured the audience.

"It's (the film) about how teen-agers are," he said. "Ron did not compromise the script. It was gritty and realistic."

The film begins with a harshly light monologue by Ben, who says, "You gotta go out there (the trestle)." It ends with a monologue, and Ben says, "Stay off the damn trestle!"

"If you look at the story in the film it's about an older guy (Ben) looking back in his redneck days, telling you a story about how he led a friend of his (Clancy) out to the trestle onto the tracks and almost got him killed," Shildknecht said. "He's obviously looking back with the benefit of hind sight."

Peer pressure is responsible a lot of the times for getting kids out there," he said. "You're led out onto the tracks not by sheepmen but by your friends."

Schildknecht interviewed about 25 people, like the characters, Ben and Clancy, in his research for the film.

"What interested me were the stories people told when they went out to the trestle and the kind of things that happened to them," he said. "Things like kids going on out there banging their hands on the hoods of their cars scaring their girlfriends, going out there chanting Pope Lick, Pope Lick."

He portrays these in the film.

Schildknecht said there is no specific sheepman legend; sometimes the creature is half-goat, half-man, walks on all fours or walks on two legs. The film's sheepman is a satyr-like creature on two legs with a face of a black ewe.

"The story is so tight among high school students that it rarely passes beyond them, he said. "It really depends on the imagination of the storyteller."

"One guy told me in J-town (Jeffersontown) there wasn't much to do back then (in high school), Schildknecht said, so playing at the trestle was a regular pastime.

The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster" features Western graduates Ben Allgeier, Clancy Dixon and Beth Kirchner and a score by the music department's Dr. David Livingston. It is partially funded by the Kentucky Heritage Foundation, of which Dr. Lynwood Montell, modern languages and intercultural studies professor, is president.

Schildknecht is now working on a 30-minute dramatic adaptation of Montell's book, "Killings: Folk Justice in the Upper South," and account of an area of Kentucky where people used killings to settle disputes and justified killing if there was a motive.

"I was looking for something on a wider Kentucky scale to tackle for this film," Schildknecht said. "I thought this was by far the most interesting I came across in doing some type of dramatic piece, that's unique to Kentucky, that's still relatively unknown in the rest of the state."

Montell said because of the controversial nature of his book, in which he is cautious about using actual names and sites, the film only in the scriptwriting stage, may meet mixed reactions, which Montell believes Schildknecht can handle after the Pope Lick film.

Schildknecht has always been drawn to strong, sometimes controversial, subjects like the Pope Lick film.

He filmed a video about Martin Luther King Jr., a modern interpretation of King's dream, under the auspices of the Jefferson County school system which caused him and the students he was working with to question the school system's right to censor.

In the film the school system said that no reference could be made to Jesus Christ or God, even in quotes from King's speeches, or beliefs of non-violence, because it would offend those believing in the right to bear arms, Schildknecht said.

"I fought it as much as I could and finally did draw the line at one point, Schildknecht said. "I was asked to remove an image of a member of the KKK (Ku Klux Klan) as a way of offending people involved with the Klan, and I said no, absolutely not."

"Ron in an artistic sense is uncompromising," Counts said, "and he is willing to take a risk."

"Isn't that what art is suppose to do? Make people aware of things they didn't know about"

Film Revives Worries of Railroad Officials
Judy Bryant
The Courier-Journal / January 15, 1989

Railroad officials with Norfolk Southern Corp are repeating their concerns about a film they fear night encourage teens to trespass on dangerous trestles.

They complained last month when "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," by Louisville producer Ron Schildknecht, premiered at the Uptown Theatre on Bardstown Road. The 16-minute film is based on a legend of a creature, half man and haLt sheep, who lives near the 90-foot-high trestle near Pope Lick Road.

Now the film has been scheduled for a four-night run at the Uptown this week.

The state coordinator of a Kentucky rail-safety organization, who viewed the film last week, said he agrees that It appears to condone trespassing and lite-threatening behavior by teens.

"I don't like anything that comes across as approving actions like that," said Robert Wells, coordinator of Kentucky Operation Lifesaver and a district claim agent in Louisville for Norfolk Southern.

In the film, a teenager walking on the trestle hangs from a railroad tie while a train passes overhead. Railroad officials say It is virtually impossible to survive under those circumstances.

The trestle has been a popular gathering place for teen-agers. Two have died in accidents there In the past two years.

After the film's only public showing Dec 29, railroad police apprehended two people at the trestle, said Norfolk Southern Corp spokesman Robert Auman. Auman also said the railroad has begun installing a chain-link fence and "No Trespassing" signs at the trestle.

At the film's premiere, a warning from the railroad was read to the audience However, railroad officials complained that the statement was barely audible, and they asked Schildknecht to add the warning to the film's soundtrack.

Schildknecht, an artist-in-residence with the Louisville Visual Art Association, said yesterday he can not edit the statement into the 16mm film before next week. But he said he has offered to record the warning and play it through the theater's public address system at each showing or to project slides of the written statement onto the movie screen. Meanwhile, Auman and tells said they were surprised that the film is being shown again in Louisville, since Schildknecht had indicated plans to enter it in film festivals or show it in schools.

Schildknecht said he has had several calls in the past two weeks from people interested in the movie.

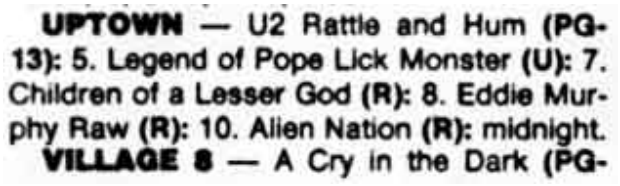
Other films in the 30-minute program planned at the Uptown are "Genesis and Catastrophe" and "Bank of Christ" by Peter Byck of Louisville, and "The Prank" by Ed Counts of Bowling Green The program will run at 7 pm Monday through Thursday.

Uptown set to show films by Kentuckians
The Courier-Journal / January 15,1989

The Uptown Theater, 1504 Bardstown Road, will show films by three Kentucky independent filmmakers tomorrow through Thursday at 7 p.m.

The films and their creators are "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," Ron Schildknecht; Genesis and Catastrophe" and "Bank of Christ," Peter Byck; and "The Prank," by Ed Counts.

"The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster" is based on a folk legend in Jefferson County and focuses on three teen-agers, a railroad trestle and the Sheepman, a half-man, half-sheep monster who lures people onto the trestle.


UPTOWN — U2 Rattle and Hum (PG-13): 5. Legend of Pope Lick Monster (U): 7. Children of a Lesser God (R): 8. Eddie Murphy Raw (R): 10. Alien Nation (R): midnight.
VILLAGE 8 — A Cry in the Dark (PG-

Two teen-agers have been killed at the trestle near Jeffersontown and Fisherville in the last two years. Some people expressed concern about the film when it was shown last month at the Uptown. They said that, instead of warning people away from the dangerous trestle, the film might encourage them to visit the area.

Schildknecht, a graduate of Seneca High School and Western Kentucky University, is an artist-in-residence at the Louisville Visual Art Association. He is completing a documentary on the closing of the White Castle on Bardstown Road and Eastern Parkway.

He recently received a Kentucky Film and Video Project grant through the Kentucky Arts Council and Kentucky Humanities Council to develop a narrative screenplay based on "Killings," a book by Lynwood Montell of Bowling Green, Ky.

Letters From Readers
The Courier-Journal, Editorial Page / January 7, 1989

The Pope Lick Monster . . .

Regarding "Trestle of death," Dec. 30:

The major concern about the film, "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," seems to be whether it will encourage more kids to venture to the railroad trestle and risk their lives. Naturally, increased publicity will attract interest. But is the alternative – ignoring the legend – a better solution?

Little has been accomplished to date discouraging such activity, which has existed for over three generations. My interest in producing this film was to examine the reasons for such behavior and place them in the proper sociological context in hopes of dealing with the problem with a deeper understanding of the factors involve. In depicting high-school students engaged in rowdy behavior, I am saying that this is how it happens, these are the circumstances, and this is what it can lead to.

We should recognize that it is the responsibility not only of the railroad company and the police to protect the lives of our young people, but the parents and teachers as well.

The legend of the Pope Lick monster, previously a privately shared tale among teen-agers, is now immortalized for all to share. This is an opportunity for us to now act as responsible, informed citizens. There really is a monster, and it's not a sheepman.

Ron Schildknecht, Producer
"The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster"
Louisville

Film Puts Pope Lick Trestle's Fatal Attraction in the Spotlight
Judy Bryant and Lisa Jessie
The Courier-Journal / January 4, 1989

There is no doubt in Sue LaRue's mind that the Pope Lick train trestle is dangerous. Eleven months ago, her only son was killed by a train while walking across the 772-foot long span off Pope Lick Road.

Still some teens visit and even try to cross the trestle in eastern Jefferson County, perhaps drawn by the legend of a bizarre half-sheep, half man or the challenge of walking across it.

"It's common when you're in high school" to go to the area, said Dennis Elbert, l9, a St. Xavier graduate who lives on Lincoln Road. "It's how teen-agers are. They think it's exciting, a cheap thrill, I guess."

Concern about safety at railroad tracks and crossings has been heightened by the Louisville premiere last week of the 16-minute film "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster." Made by local filmmaker Ron Schildknecht, it portrays a monster who purportedly lives near the trestle.

In the film, shown last Thursday at the Uptown Theatre on Bards town Road, the sheep-man lures a teen-ager onto the 90-foot-high span. Suddenly a train approaches and the youth narrowly escapes by hanging onto a railroad tie.

In reality, such an escape probably wouldn't work, railroad officials say.

"It's just not real life," said Bob Auman, a spokesman for Norfolk Southern Corp., which owns the Pope Lick trestle. "It's about as real as all the guns and violence you see on TV."

There is no space to stand or lay on the trestle while a train passes. There are no walkways, handholds or ledges - other than the railroad ties.

Railroad officials say it usually takes a train five to eight minutes to clear the span. An average person could not hang from the trestle that long before the intense noise and vibration from a train passing overhead would sap his strength and cause him to fall, Auman said.

Also, a moving train can require as much as 1 1/2 miles to stop, said Charlie Castner, a retired CSX Transportation spokesman who is active in Kentucky Operation Life saver, a rail-safety organization.

Norfolk Southern objects to photographs or film footage that depicts people trespassing on railroad property, Auman said, and it routinely notifies film-makers and publications that distribute such material.

No figures are available on how many people have died at the Pope Lick trestle or at other trestles in Kentucky, Auman said.

Two teens have died in accidents there in the past two years. The most recent victim was Jack Charles Bahm II, LaRue's son, who was killed Feb. 18.

Statistics show that more than l,000 people were killed and twice as many injured in accidents on train tracks and trestles in the United States last year.



A sobering memorial to Jack Charles Bahm II remains on a support

A sobering memorial to Jack Charles Bahm II remains on a support to the Pope Lick train trestle. Bahm was killed by a train while trying to cross the trestle last February. Photo by Paul Schuhmann

Teen-agers say the thrill of confronting that danger attracts people to the trestle. "It's just a challenge to cross it without a train hitting them," said Brigid Bakanowski, a senior at Seneca High. Bakanowski, of Shepherds Court, has never been on the trestle but knows people who have been.

"They realize that it's dangerous, but not how dangerous," said Chris Connelly, of Garden Lake Lane, a 1988 graduate of Trinity High.

St. Xavier students are "a little bit more aware" of the dangers since Bahm was a St. X graduate, said John Evans, a St. X senior.

Officer Gary Fields, spokesman for the Jefferson County Police Department, said police pass the trestle nightly and disperse teen agers from the area. Police have also issued citations for criminal trespassing, Fields said.

He said a "no trespassing" sign had been posted, "but the kids tear it down."

Some teens say the appeal of the area has waned, particularly since people have died trying to cross the trestle.

"People used to go out there," said Jeffersontown High senior Travis Ziegier, of Talitha Drive. "They don't go out there much any more."

Jenni Brummett, a senior at Seneca, said she doesn't think people try to cross the trestle as much.

"There is nowhere to go if a train comes," said Brummett. "That's it, I mean, you're dead."

Last week, after viewing "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," LaRue said she knew, finally, what her son experienced during his last moments on the trestle. She said the film realistically portrays the dilemma of being surprised by a train.

"I can exactly envision my son's death now," LaRue said. "I no longer have to wonder what it felt like."

She said the film also shows that there is no escape for anyone in that situation.

Schildknecht, a Seneca High graduate, said he made the film to capture the legend. No other public showings of the film are planned locally, said Schildknecht, who plans to enter it in film festivals.

He agreed with LaRue and railroad officials to incorporate a warning about the Pope Lick trestle just before the film's credits.

"The film is a celebration of folk lore, of youth and adolescence," Schildknecht said. "But at the same time I don't want to leave any doubts of the danger."

WAVE-3 TV News / December 30, 1989

Trestle of Death: Film Depicting Legend Stirs Fear of Life Imitating Art
Judy Bryant
The Courier-Journal / December 30, 1988

According to local legend, a hideous half-man, half-sheep creature with a hypnotic gaze lures people onto the Pope Lick train trestle in eastern Jefferson County.

Now concerns have been raised that a movie about the myth may do the same - adding to the death toll at the 90-foot-high, 772-foot-long trestle.

"The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," a l6-minute narrative film produced by Louisville filmmaker Ron Schildknecht, had its premiere last night before about 400 people at the Uptown Theatre on Bardstown Road.



Trestle of death

Film depicting legend stirs fear of life imitating art

By JUDY BRYANT
Staff Writer

According to local legend, a hideous half-man, half-sheep creature with a hypnotic gaze lures people onto the Pope Lick train trestle in eastern Jefferson County.

Now concerns have been raised that a movie about the myth may do the same — adding to the death toll at the 90-foot-high, 772-foot-long trestle.

"The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," a 16-minute narrative film produced by Louisville filmmaker Ron Schildknecht, had its premiere last night before about 400 people at the Uptown Theatre on Bardstown Road.

No other public showings are planned, but Schildknecht, an artist-in-residence with the Louisville Visual Art Association, said he plans to enter the film in film festivals and hopes to find a distributor to show it in arts theaters nationwide.

But an attorney for Norfolk Southern Corp., which owns the trestle, said he'll talk with Schildknecht about first making some changes in the film.

"I think it sends the wrong message," said attorney Charles Greenwell. "The more I see the film, the more I'm convinced of that."

The film is based on a folk legend that Schildknecht said has existed for more than three generations among teen-agers who live near Jeffersontown and Fisherville.

Most variations of the legend proclaim the existence of the sheep-man monster that lives near the trestle off Pope Lick

See FILM
Back page, col. 5, this section

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The film is based on a folk legend that Schildknecht said has existed for more than three generations among teen-agers who live near Jeffersontown and Fisherville.

Most variations of the legend proclaim the existence of the sheep-man monster that lives near the trestle off Pope Lick Road. Some versions say

the monster chases people away from the trestle. But in Schildknecht's version, the creature lures youths onto the tracks with intense hypnotic powers.

At least one part of the film is factual: Area teen-agers have been drawn to the trestle, and two have died there in the past two years.

Jack Charles Bahm II, a 17-year old Spalding University student, was struck and killed by a train last Feb. 18 while walking on the trestle. In May 1987, l9-year-old David Wayne Bryant died of injuries he suffered a year earlier when he jumped from the trestle to avoid getting hit by a train.

An epilogue to the film, narrated by actor Ben Allgeier, alludes to the deaths and warns viewers to stay away. But the film opens with Allgeier explaining the legend and saying, "You gotta go out there."

A written statement from the railroad warning of the trestle's dangers was read to the audience be fore the premiere. The statement said that anyone on the trestle could be prosecuted for trespassing and warned that the trestle has no walkways, handholds or ledges.

Railroad officials and others also said the film is misleading because it suggests that it is possible to hang from the trestle to avoid being struck by a train.

In the film, a character named Clancy, a high school student, goes to the trestle at night with two friends after they stop to buy beer. As Clancy walks across the trestle, he imagines confronting the sheep man monster on the tracks. Suddenly, a train approaches and Clancy narrowly escapes by hanging suspended from the side of the trestle.

In reality, few people would have time to climb under the trestle be fore the train arrived, or the strength to hang on until it passes, officials say.

After a private screening Wednesday for railroad officials and Bahm's relatives, Schildknecht said he would consider eliminating the offending scene.

However, last night Schildknecht said he had decided not to change the film, because it poses little threat of attracting visitors to the trestle from outside the Louisville area.

If the film has more showings locally, Schildknecht said, he would incorporate the railroad's statement just before the final credits to help ensure that audiences hear the information.

Railroad officials complained that last night's statement was barely audible.

Schildknecht, a Western Kentucky University graduate, began working on the film in 1985. Most of the $6,000 cost came out of his pocket.

Most of the film was shot at the Pope Lick trestle. However, scenes that show Clancy and a friend on the trestle were filmed at another, safer trestle, he said.

Schildknecht said he contacted Norfolk Southern officials before he began filming, but was told the railroad would not cooperate unless he first obtained a $3 million liability insurance policy. He said he was un able to find an insurance company that would write such a policy, and so proceeded without the railroad's permission.

Bob Auman, a Norfolk Southern spokesman in Roanoke, Va., said the company "objects strenuously" to photographs or films "that show people trespassing on railroad property."

"It undermines our efforts on behalf of safety when movies like this are made," Auman said.

Schildknecht thinks the film could actually improve railway safety. He wants to show it to students in the Jefferson County Public Schools to help educate them to the dangers of climbing the trestle, although he has not yet talked with school officials about the idea.

Some people who saw the film last night predicted it could encourage teen-agers to visit the trestle.

"It seems like they were having fun there (in the film) the way they were cavorting around," said Neil Norman, 15, a sophomore at the Brown School.

But Norman, who said he had never been to the trestle and was unfamiliar with the Pope Lick legend, doesn't expect many will try to cross the span.

"Hopefully they'll be smart enough not to."

Happenings/East End
Pat O'Connor
The Courier Journal, Neighborhoods/East End / December 28, 1998

Special Events

A premiere of the movie "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," sponsored by the Louisville Visual Art Association and the Uptown Theatre, will begin at 7 p.m. tomorrow at the theater, 1504 Bardstown Road. Louisville artist Ron Schildknecht's film is based on a folk legend of a half-man, half-sheep creature that lives near the Southern Railway System trestle on Pope Lick Road near Fisherville in eastern Jefferson County. Admission is $2.

The association will have a public reception at The Water Tower, on River Road at Zorn Avenue, after the premiere.

Tomorrow's best bet: 'Pope Lick Monster'
Martha Elson
The Courier Journal, Food & Features / December 28, 1988

"The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," a 16-minute narrative film by Louisville artist and teacher Ron Schildknecht, will premiere at 7 p.m. tomorrow at the Uptown Theatre, 1504 Bardstown Road.

The film is based on a folk legend among teen-agers near Fisherville in southeastern Jefferson County.

It focuses on a half-man, half-sheep creature that is said to live near the 100-foot-high railroad trestle on Pope Lick Road and the teen initiation rites associated with the legend.

The three-year project was funded in part by the Kentucky Folklife Foundation, with assistance from the Louisville Visual Art Association, the Kentucky Arts Council and others. Schildknecht, an arts council artist in residence, also is involved in producing a film about the recent closing of the White Castle restaurant at Bardstown Road and Eastern Parkway.

A short animated film, "A Day in the Life of a CPA" by Ellen Ter Beest, will also be shown. After the showing, a reception will be held at the Water Tower, Zorn Avenue and Upper River Road. Admission to the showing is $2.

Notes: Pope Lick Monster Film
The Courier Journal, Arts and Leisure / December 25, 1988

The premiere of "The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster," Louisvillian Ron Schildknecht 16-minute narrative film about the folklore surrounding a train trestle in southeast Jefferson County, will be at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Uptown Theater, Bardstown Road and Eastern Parkway. Tickets are $2. The event is sponsored by the Louisville Visual Art Association, which will hold a free reception after the film at its Water Tower gallery, 3005 Upper River Road.

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There used to be hundreds of clock masters in Hampton Roads. Now, he may be the only one left.

By Joanne Kimberlin
The Virginian-Pilot
Nov 5, 2016



Bill Tiernan | The Virginian-Pilot

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Will Reha of Virginia Beach in the dial room of the clock tower on the campus of Hampton University on Sunday evening, Oct. 23, 2016. He and his son, Chester, do maintenance on the clock and were scheduled to turn the clock back at the end of Daylight Savings Time.

Daylight saving time began today. Set your clock back an hour if you haven't done so already.

HAMPTON

Will Reha climbed up an old dark tower at Hampton University Saturday night to turn back the hands of time.

There aren't many clocks – or clock masters – like this left.

The clock: an 1887, multistory work of mechanical art.

The master: a state-certified expert on timepieces, otherwise known as an horologist.

Every fall and spring, Reha starts at the bottom of a rickety, winding staircase and makes his way into the heart of Hampton University's 150-foot clock tower, where he adjusts 4-foot wooden hands for daylight saving time.

Reha, 66, once spent such nights scrambling from churches to banks to schools. But traditional town and street clocks are nearly extinct. Electricity powers most survivors. Radio signals handle daylight saving time automatically.

Reha's only remaining maintenance contract: Hampton University. The brick tower with its four clock faces, part of the university's Memorial Church, is a campus landmark.

The best part is hidden inside. Hike the stairs, climb through attic-type doors, step lightly across questionable floorboards. Framing the ascent are stout oak beams - papery-dry to the touch after more than a century.

Tick-tocks become audible on the second level, where a 150-pound pendulum bob – the lowest part of the clock – swings hypnotically back and forth. Its 8-foot rod extends upward through a hole in the ceiling, where it connects to the clockworks, a marvel of moving parts invented for the sole purpose of synchronizing society.

It was built by E. Howard Watch & Clock Co. of Boston, crafter of numerous notable timepieces including the one on Chicago's iconic Wrigley Building.

Brass gears, steel shafts and specialized parts sprout like an antique Erector set from a table-sized cast-iron base. Most parts are original, still regulating each other so reliably their timing is rarely off by more than a few seconds a month.

"Sure, you can get clocks today that stay perfectly accurate," Reha said during a tower tour last month, "and some are incredibly cheap. But these old clocks are museum pieces. Priceless."

Reha, raised on New York's Staten Island, says he was born with a soft spot for anything with gears. After a stint in the Navy – he was transferred to Hampton Roads in 1970 – he became interested in timepieces, which led to a state-sponsored apprenticeship.

In 1977, he opened Clockworks in the Hilltop area of Virginia Beach.

"I was making almost six figures selling and repairing clocks," he said. "Every nice home had one. I kept an inventory of 150 grandfather clocks and 300 wall and mantle clocks. People were buying anything you had on the shelf."

Business began to slide in the late 1980s. The classic clock was no longer a staple of home décor. Factories were cranking out watches so inexpensive they weren't worth repairing.

Reha, normally a good-humored fellow, spits out "digital" like it's a dirty word.

"No workmanship," he said. "No respect."

Trying to hang on, he relocated his shop to London Bridge in the 1990s. By then, Hampton University's clock had fallen on hard times, too.

To cut down on maintenance and manual winding, the clock had been rigged with electricity four decades earlier, which ultimately ground down gears. It was stopped in 1998 to avoid further damage.

A three-year renovation got it ticking again. Reha won the maintenance contract in 2001.

Ever since, he's called on the clock at least once a month to dust and lubricate. Electricity is still used, but mostly just to hoist weights that wind the clock. At every visit, he tests and tweaks for accuracy, knowing temperature swings can affect precision by contracting or expanding metal.

Reha pointed to a delicately balanced piece that flips steadily back and forth. "That's a Dennison double three-legged gravity escapement," he said, before giving up the attempt to explain. "That means nothing to anyone but a geek like me."

Up another flight of stairs, Reha entered the dial room, where a cable from the clock mechanism comes through the floor, and splits off in four directions to feed the 8-foot dials. Spotlights mounted in the room illuminate the backsides of their frosted-glass.

Stepping over a pigeon skeleton, he scaled the final flight to the top of the tower, where 2,000 pounds of bells hung in the dark, and wind whistled through the open archways.

He used a flashlight to check springs and wires leading to hammers, triggered by signals from the clockworks two floors down.

Hampton Roads twinkled below, woven with velvety black fingers of watery darkness.

Reha closed his shop in 2010, finished off by internet shopping and cellphones. “You don’t need a watch when you’ve got a phone,” he said.

Mobile repair and service kept him busy for awhile, but that dwindled, too.

“We used to have a guild,” he said, with 200 local clock masters. “I used to be the vice president. Now, I think I’m the only one left.”

Making the change for daylight saving time is easy enough. Reha pulls a particular pin on the old clockworks, rotates a gear, then heads down to walk around the outside of the tower, neck craned to ensure all dials cooperated.

“I love this clock,” he said, before climbing into his 1991 station wagon to head back across the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel to his home in Kempsville.

“With care, it’ll run for hundreds of years,” he said. “I feel lucky to just see it, much less get my hands on it. They just don’t make ‘em like that anymore.”

His license plate – CLOX4U – disappears into the night.

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Joanne Kimberlin

Joanne Kimberlin, a 2007 Pulitzer finalist, is an enterprise writer at The Virginian-Pilot. She writes about all kinds of subjects, from mercenaries to moon rocks to mental illness.

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Exclusive: Detective Tries To Solve 25-Year-Old Serial Killer Cold Case. One Suspect Is A Cop.

huffingtonpost.com

Chewing tobacco DNA may finally provide a new break in the case of New Orleans' infamous Storyville slayer.

11/03/2016 06:02 am ET | **Updated** 14 hours ago

David Lohr Senior Crime Reporter, The Huffington Post



Between 1991 and 1995, a suspected serial killer claimed the lives of multiple people in the New Orleans area. This image shows a police sketch released to the media in 1992, after one woman survived an attack and provided a description to police of the man she said choked her and left her for dead.

Huffington Post Illustration

NEW ORLEANS — Twenty-five years ago, the melting pot of culture and tradition that makes up the Crescent City was overshadowed by a cloud of evil. The historic metropolis that Louis Armstrong once dubbed the "Land of Dreams" had become a nightmare for the families of more than two dozen people who turned up dead in outlying swamps and bayous.

The murders garnered national attention when a police officer was named a suspect, and a task force assembled to investigate the crimes suggested more than one killer was responsible. The conviction of a cab driver for one of those murders based on testimony from jailhouse informants and scant physical evidence, along with multiple allegations of misconduct against the task force leader, cast doubt on the investigation. The investigation eventually fell from the media spotlight, with all but one of the murders remaining unsolved.

When The Huffington Post recently began defrosting this cold case, one of the few original investigators remaining on the job decided to take a fresh look at evidence recovered from one of the crime scenes. He's now pinning his hopes on advancements in DNA testing technology, which could finally bring a killer to justice.

Particularly, cops are looking again at a wad of chewing tobacco found near one strangled woman's corpse. Police want the tobacco, now 21 years old, to be tested again after an initial review in 1995 came back inconclusive. At the time, cops were checking to see if saliva matched that of former New Orleans Police Department cop Victor Gant, who was subsequently kicked off the force, in part for a domestic violence charge.

'Some Were Drowned, Some Were Suffocated'

"Back then you [didn't] have the quality of testing that you have now," Major C.J. Destor of the St. John the Baptist Parish Sheriff's Office told HuffPost. "Since I've spoken to you, I've ran it by my crime scene tech … so we can have [evidentiary samples] resubmitted and looked at."

David Lohr/Huffington Post



Between 1991 and 1995, a suspected serial killer claimed the lives of multiple people in the New Orleans area. This image shows a police sketch released to the media in 1992, after one woman survived an attack and provided a description to police of the man she said choked her and left her for dead. Major C.J. Destor works in his office at the St. John the Baptist Sheriff's office in LaPlace, Louisiana, on Oct. 20. St. John the Baptist Sheriff's Office Major C.J. Destor points to where Karen Ivester's body was found in LaPlace, Louisiana. The location in LaPlace, Louisiana, where Sharon Robinson's body was found face-down in shallow water. A selection of available images of victims that police say are investigated as possibly being connected to the LaPlace murders. Major C.J. Destor with his case file on Victor Gant. Photos showing Victor Gant. The left image is from the Carver College Police Department website; the center photo was supplied by the St. John the Baptist Sheriff's Office; and the right photo was shared on Facebook in June. Notorious cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer sits with his defense team during his 1991 trial. Dahmer went on a killing spree in the 1980s during which he murdered 17 men and boys. He often had sex with the corpses before dismembering them and, in some cases, ate pieces of human flesh. After his conviction, Dahmer was killed by a fellow inmate in prison. AP

Seven of the 27 bodies discovered between 1991 and 1995 in the New Orleans area were found in Destor's jurisdiction. Most of the victims, police said, were African-American women involved in drugs and prostitution. Five of the victims were men, but some of them were reportedly transgender. The majority of the victims' bodies were dumped in bayous or canals situated along highways bordering the western banks of Lake Pontchartrain.

"They were strung out all along the I-10, I-55 and I-310 corridor," Destor recalled. "Some were drowned, some of them were suffocated."

Because of the secluded locations, the victims tended to be in advanced states of decomposition by the time they were found, leaving evidence destroyed and some victims unidentified.

'When I Saw Her At The Funeral Home, I Freaked Out'

Authorities got their first big break on April 30, 1995, when fishermen walking below the elevated I-55 interstate in St. John Parish discovered a woman's nude body at about 8:11 a.m. central. When officers arrived on the scene, they discovered a footprint from a woman's training shoe next to the body and a wad of chewing tobacco nearby. Rigor mortis, which typically occurs approximately 12 hours after death, was still in its early stages, suggesting the victim had not been in the area long.

"At the time, we had no trace of who she was," Destor said. "We later found out that she was Karen Ivester, white female, 30 years of age … and the cause of death was asphyxia due to suffocation. You could see in the autopsy report they made notes of some abrasions on her neck where she had been grabbed by someone and choked."

David Lohr/Huffington Post

Ivester's daughter, Brandi, was 13 years old at the time. She still remembers her grandmother delivering the news.

"It was surreal," she told HuffPost. "I thought, 'No, it's not her. This isn't true.' Later, when I saw her at the funeral home, I freaked out and started screaming. I couldn't believe it was her. It was the most horrible thing I've experienced in my entire life."



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Roughly three hours after Ivester's body was found, detectives were notified another body had been discovered, approximately 1 mile south of Ivester's. The body was face-down in a shallow body of water next to an I-55 off-ramp.

This victim — a 28-year-old woman —was fully dressed, clad in a uniform from Harrah's New Orlean's Hotel & Casino. She was wearing an identification badge that said her name was Sharon Robinson.

"I remember her leaving for work the night before," Robinson's daughter, Djuana, told HuffPost. She was 10 years old at the time of the murder.

"Then the FBI came and knocked on my grandma's door and told us what happened. I still have that open wound, like it all just happened."

Any thoughts of the killings being coincidental evaporated when detectives discovered Robinson was wearing women's training shoes with tread that matched the footprint found next to Ivester's body.

Robinson's cause of death was listed as drowning. Police theorized her killer stood behind her and held her head under water.



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David Lohr/Huffington Post

The killings, police said, were eerily similar to a series of slayings that began four years prior in Algiers, a historic New Orleans neighborhood located on the west bank of the Mississippi River. After a close call, in which a woman survived after she was choked and left for dead, police had a sketch and a suspect description: a black, muscular man in his 30s. When the sketch was released to the media in 1992, the killings stopped for five months.

Then, a new series of deaths occurred. This time, the victims were all from Tremé, a racially mixed neighborhood known for music traditions and Créole culture. The

Oct. 20. St. John the Baptist Sheriff's Office Major C.J. Destor points to where Karen Ivester's body was found in LaPlace, Louisiana. The location in LaPlace, Louisiana, where Sharon Robinson's body was found face-down in shallow water. A selection of available images of victims that police say are investigated as possibly being connected to the LaPlace murders. Major C.J. Destor with his case file on Victor Gant. Photos showing Victor Gant. The left image is from the Carver College Police Department website; the center photo was supplied by the St. John the Baptist Sheriff's Office; and the right photo was shared on Facebook in June. Notorious cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer sits with his defense team during his 1991 trial. Dahmer went on a killing spree in the 1980s during which he murdered 17 men and boys. He often had sex with the corpses before dismembering them and, in some cases, ate pieces of human flesh. After his conviction, Dahmer was killed by a fellow inmate in prison. AP

neighborhood was also once home to New Orleans' red light district, Storyville. While the district had long since been shut down, sex work persisted there. Sex workers are at a heightened risk for violence.

Police from New Orleans and the city's surrounding parishes, believing that one person was responsible for the slayings, teamed up with the FBI and formed a task force to catch the killer. On Aug. 12, 1995, Richard Pennington, then chief of the New Orleans Police Department, held a press conference and confirmed community suspicions that a serial killer was stalking the city.

Those in attendance didn't expect Pennington to reveal that one of his own — New Orleans Police Officer Victor Gant — was a suspect in the murders of Robinson and Ivester.

'He Had Hit Her. He Had Beat Her'

Pennington stopped short of calling Gant, 33, a suspect in the other slayings. However, he did say he believed all the killings were related — something that did not go unnoticed by Gant's attorney.

"There's some sort of syllogism at work here," attorney John Reed told The Boston Globe in August 1995. "If Victor Gant is a suspect in two cases, therefore Victor Gant is a suspect in all."

Gant, Destor told HuffPost, knew months earlier that police were zeroing in on him because he was formally interviewed at the sheriff's office on May 4, 1995. During questioning, Gant denied any wrongdoing, but refused a lie detector test, police said.

"He gave them a lot of answers [and] after they interviewed him, they took his information and went out and interviewed other people, and they were able to determine a lot of his statements didn't seem to go along with the people they were interviewing," Destor said.



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Huffington Post Illustration

According to police, suspicion first fell on Gant when detectives retraced Ivester and Robinson's final steps.

It was about 10 p.m. local time on April 30, 1995, when Ivester, a mother of two, left the Harvey apartment she shared with her boyfriend to work in the French Quarter. Roughly five hours later, Ivester was spotted standing outside the employee exit of Harrah's. Authorities believe Ivester was waiting on Robinson. The two had been spotted together in the weeks leading up to their murders, police said.

Robinson, a mother of three, had recently split up with Gant, her longtime boyfriend. Two months before

left her for dead. Major C.J. Destor works in his office at the St. John the Baptist Sheriff's office in LaPlace, Louisiana, on Oct. 20. St. John the Baptist Sheriff's Office Major C.J. Destor points to where Karen Ivester's body was found in LaPlace, Louisiana. The location in LaPlace, Louisiana, where Sharon Robinson's body was found face-down in shallow water. A selection of available images of victims that police say are investigated as possibly being connected to the LaPlace murders. Major C.J. Destor with his case file on Victor Gant. Photos showing Victor Gant. The left image is from the Carver College Police Department website; the center photo was supplied by the St. John the Baptist Sheriff's Office; and the right photo was shared on Facebook in June. Notorious cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer sits with his defense team during his 1991 trial. Dahmer went on a killing spree in the 1980s during which he murdered 17 men and boys. He often had sex with the corpses before dismembering them and, in some cases, ate pieces of human flesh. After his conviction, Dahmer was killed by a fellow inmate in prison. AP

her slaying, Robinson alleged that Gant, a boxer, weightlifter and 15-year veteran patrolman, had abused her, police said.

"[We] spoke with some family members, and the first thing that the family members told our deputies was that … they were having domestic problems," Destor said. "He had hit her. He had beat her … she had been brought to the hospital on a few occasions."

'A Lot Of Things Were Swept Under The Rug'

When police questioned Robinson's daughter Djuana, she revealed several troubling things about her mother's relationship with Gant — memories she still retains.

"They fought all the time," Djuana told HuffPost. "My mother had a broken nose once, and she went to police, but a lot of the things were swept under the rug because he was a police officer."

Questioned by police, witnesses at Harrah's casino said they saw Gant with Robinson at 2:30 a.m. — roughly six hours before Ivester's body was found.

In June 1995, authorities obtained a warrant seeking head hair, pubic hair and saliva samples from Gant. The samples, along with the wad of chewing tobacco found near Ivester's body, were sent off to a crime lab for comparison.

Roughly four months later, investigators hit a brick wall when the results of the DNA tests proved to be inconclusive.

In August 1996, Pennington, now serving as police superintendent, held a disciplinary hearing. Gant was fired for four departmental violations, including the alleged battery of Robinson.

"I'm very disappointed in the superintendent," Gant told The Times-Picayune after the hearing. "I thought he treated me unfairly. A lot of other people who have been charged worse than that are still on the job."

But Gant's interview was interrupted when Robinson's older sister, Teri, and a group of supporters walked up and confronted him.

"Look at her," Terri Robinson yelled, as she held up a photograph of her sister. "How can you do this to us? ... All she wanted to do was love you. I hope she haunts you every night. Every night."

Gant, in what The Times-Picayune described as a "gesture of defiance," spit chewing-tobacco juice into the crowd.

Four months later, Gant was back in the headlines after he and another girlfriend, Karen Thibodeaux, filed battery complaints against one another. Thibodeaux, according to police, alleged Gant choked and threatened her.

"It seems to be a pattern with Victor Gant," Terri Robinson told The Times-Picayune. "I hope Karen Thibodeaux pursues this to the full extent of the law. Victor Gant needs to know that there are females who will challenge him. He needs to know that he can't go on brutalizing women."

After a series of closed-door conversations with attorneys, Gant and Thibodeaux agreed to drop their complaints.

Contacted by HuffPost, Thibodeaux declined to discuss the case.



David Lohr/Huffington Post

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After more than two decades, Gant is still a person of interest to police.

"He still remains a suspect to this day," Destor said. "Victor is a strong, strong suspect in not only Sharon and Karen's homicide, but he could very well have a lot of ties to these other bodies that were found."

Gant, who has since moved to Georgia, did not respond to requests for comment.

Continuing A Law Enforcement Career

It appears Gant has worked in some capacity with the Carver College Police Department, which serves the Christian school in Atlanta. Two photos identifying Gant as an auxiliary officer and showing him in uniform were available on the department website earlier this month, but one has since been removed. Another photo shared on Facebook in July showed Gant in front of a patrol car, also in uniform.

Jill Perry, the records custodian for the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, said Gant is "not a certified police officer in the state of Georgia." It's possible Gant served Carver College as a volunteer. But when reached by HuffPost via telephone, Carver College Police Chief R.J. Collins denied Gant was ever a part of the department.

"You got your information mixed up," Collins said.

When asked about the photos of Gant in uniform, Collins hung up.

Carver College Police/Facebook/St. John the Baptist Sheriff

In a follow-up call to HuffPost, Carver College President Robert Crummie defended the police chief.



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"Nobody's done you harm," he said. "Nobody's broken a law. Nobody's committed a sin … people are just uncomfortable about talking to strangers, giving information on anybody that's not solicited through an authoritative source. I want to say this as politely as I can, you guys will have to track [Gant] down."

Pressed further, Crummie said Gant is "no longer at Carver," but declined to discuss it further. "We're not obligated to give any information."

When asked about the inconsistencies, Jeff Miller, director of the certification and training division at the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council, said his agency is "currently taking a look into the situation."

Ivester and Robinson's daughters, meanwhile, are hoping the renewed effort to retest DNA in the case will bring about answers in the coming months.

"It's been hard for us," said Ivester's daughter, Amanda, who was 3 years old when her mother was killed. "Brandi has had a hard time dealing with it. There have been nights where she's so upset that she goes and sits at Mom's grave and cries for hours. I don't do that … I ball it up into this tight little ball and I shove it down and I almost act like it just didn't happen — that one day, I'm going to wake up, 3 years old again, and she's going to be here and it never happened to begin with."

Gant v. Deptartment of Police by crimewriter74 on Scribd

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Operation Drumbeat: The Nazis Attack on the East Coast



U534

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese Empire launched a surprise attack on the US Navy stationed at Pearl Harbor, killing thousands of American sailors and dragging the United States into the Second World War. The attack has become infamous; unprovoked, it spurred a righteous anger and a lust for revenge that helped sustain the public's morale during the darkest hours of the greatest war in history. In the popular consciousness, the attack on Pearl Harbor was the last time an enemy had struck such a blow against the United States on its home soil until 9/11. It's a popular idea, but like many popular ideas it's wrong.

In World War II alone, there was more than one instance where America's enemies penetrated her borders. The Japanese, as a part of a grand offensive across the Pacific, took a lonely island on the tip of Alaska's Aleutian Island chain (to be fair though, Alaska wasn't a state at the time.) Again, the Japanese attacked the American homeland later in the war with a series of ingenious if ultimately ineffective balloon attacks.

Strangely enough though, the most deadly attacks in American territory were not executed by the Japanese, but by their allies, the Nazis. Nazi Germany had promised the Japanese that if America declared war on Japan, Germany would declare war on America. After FDR famously declared war on December 8, Hitler declared war on the US on December 11. Before that, the US had been supplying Britain with much needed war materiel under the Lend-Lease Act. This gave the US some experience dealing with the German U-boat Wolfpacks prowling the Atlantic. This experience, however, would not prepare them for what was to come. After the declaration of war, all restrictions on Nazi U-boats were lifted. Vizeadmiral Karl Donitze ordered his U-boats to execute an audacious attack on US shipping, taking the war right to the US east coast. The attacks–dubbed Operation Drumbeat–would account for a quarter of all shipping lost during the war and claim the lives of more than 5,000 American sailors.

"The Second Happy Time."



A view from the deck of a British destroyer. Lack of these types of ships on the East Coast of the US made Operation Drumbeat lethal for American shipping.

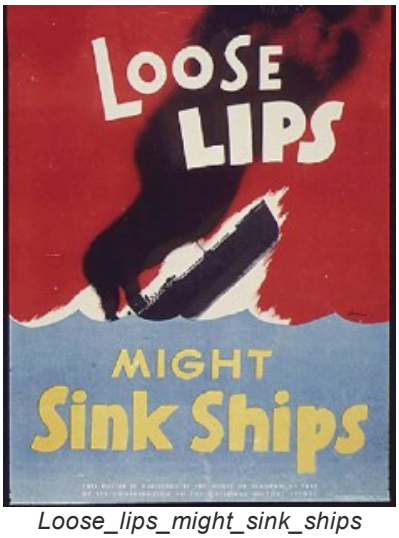
The initial phases of Operation Drumbeat were executed using Type IX U-boats. Bigger and more cumbersome than their leaner counterparts who caused so much havoc among shipping convoys in the mid-Atlantic, the Type IX were nonetheless ideal for work along the US coast because they could easily be outfitted for long voyages. The Nazis only possessed a dozen of the big boats, and seven were engaged in other operations, so only five would make the two week voyage across the Atlantic to perform the opening phases of the operation. Interestingly enough, while the operation was conducted in the utmost secrecy, British intelligence picked up routine transmissions the boats made when leaving the

Bay of Biscay and were able to accurately follow the progress of the task force across the Atlantic. They were able to give a warning to Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief of the US Fleet, that the German subs were on the way, but little was done to counter the threat. Admiral King was occupied with the Japanese in the Pacific. Besides, the so-called "North Atlantic Coastal Frontier" wasn't completely undefended; Rear Admiral Adolphus Andrews commanded a fleet in the area responsible for the security of coastal shipping. The only problem was that the fleet was made up of a motley assortment of Coast Guard cutters, converted yachts, and other assorted vintage boats that were more fit for a museum than modern naval combat. Also, what few planes available to Andrews were too small and short ranged to have much effect against what was coming.

As if all that weren't bad enough, Andrews and other naval officials refused to listen to advice from the British, who had dealt with the Nazi menace for more than two years. The British advised Andrews that merchant ships ought to travel in convoys, even if they lacked an armed escort ship. Hard experience had shown the British that ships in convoys, even unarmed ones, were more likely to survive a U-boat attack. Also, ships should change up their routes. Coastal towns and cities should black out their lights, to make it more difficult for U-boats to spot ships backlit at night against city lights. Andrews and others ignored the advice, partially because Andrews was convinced that grouping ships into convoys would only provide more targets for enemy U-boats, and partially because a black out order would harm commerce and tourism on the East Coast.

What followed was dubbed by the German's as "The Second Happy Time," so named because from January to August of 1942, German U-boats managed to inflict devastating losses on American shipping with little to no risk to their own forces (the "First Happy Time" was from 1940 to 1941 during the first phase of the war in the Atlantic.) To use the old cliche, it was like shooting fish in a barrel.

"Loose Lips Sink Ships."



Loose_lips_might_sink_ships

Once again, American response to the devastation was inadequate at best. Despite east coast dockyards manufacturing destroyers capable of at least blunting the effects of the U-boat assault, they sat in harbor while off-shore merchant ships sank under German U-boat fire. More waves of Nazi boats came to US coastal waters after the initial assault; the remaining Type IX, and the smaller Type VII, specially outfitted for the trip by filling tanks normally reserved for drinking water with diesel fuel.

While the American leadership bungled the response to the threat, civilians no doubt began to notice all the ships blowing up off the coast. Propaganda and secrecy was the order of the day; rather than take practical steps to deter the threat, the US Navy was content to use propaganda to cover up the attacks in order to preserve public morale. The now famous phrase "Loose lips sink ships" originated during this propaganda effort, less to keep US naval secrets from leaking into the hands of German spies and more to keep US citizens quiet about what they were seeing out their windows. The cover up was so effective that Operation Drumbeat and its devastating effectiveness still remains largely unknown to this day.

Slowly, US forces got their act together. They adopted British recommendations piecemeal at first, implementing a limited convoy system in April 1942 and restricting shipping to daylight hours. By mid-May, full convoys were trawling the waters of the East Coast, and the British helpfully offered

corvettes specially built for anti-submarine warfare, along with planes designed to combat the U-boat menace. Gradually, the Nazi wolfpacks began to move away from the East Coast as defenses grew tougher. Operation Drumbeat ended with only 7 German U-boats lost, but these minimal losses were enough to repel the aggressors and push the war away from American shores.

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This entry was posted in Weapons and Warfare and tagged Operation Drumbeat, Pearl Harbor, weapons and warfare, World War II on July 30, 2014 by Andrew Kincaid.

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What are the origins of the word ‘shoddy’?

Tuesday 29th March 2011

historyextra.com

BBC History Magazine logo

'Shoddy' was cloth made from recycled wool, first manufactured (and probably invented) by Benjamin Law in Batley, West Yorkshire, in 1813...



Illustration by Glen McBeth.

The process involved grinding woollen rags into a fibrous mass and mixing this with some fresh wool. Law’s nephews later came up with a similar process involving felt or hard-spun woollen cloth, the product in this case being called ‘mungo’.

Shoddy and mungo manufacture was, by the 1860s, a huge industry in West Yorkshire, particularly in and around the Batley and Dewsbury areas. It created a huge demand for rags and waste wool, and made clothes much more affordable.

Shoddy came to mean ‘cheap and nasty’ almost certainly because of the American Civil War (1861–65). Recruitment of huge armies on both sides created an immense demand for uniforms, which some manufacturers struggled to meet (or exploit) with poor-quality shoddy. This led to stories of soldiers’ clothing falling to pieces after just a few days’ wear, or even in heavy rain.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the exact derivation of ‘shoddy’ is unknown. Some claim it is related to the mining term ‘shoad’, meaning scraps of rocks or ore. Perhaps more plausible, however, is the suggestion that shoddy was made from cloth that had been thrown away, from clothes that had been ‘shed’. But that’s just speculation.

Answered by Eugene Byrne, author and journalist.

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Over 300 million AdultFriendFinder accounts have been exposed in a massive breach

by Andrew Liptak @AndrewLiptak Nov 13, 2016, 3:04pm EST

theverge.com

Adult dating service company Friend Finder Network has reportedly been hacked, with over 412 million accounts, email addresses, and passwords from their websites made available on criminal marketplaces. Notably, the database does not include more detailed personal information, but could still be used to confirm whether a person was a user of the service.

Breach notification site *LeakedSource* first reported the attack, indicating that over 300 million AdultFriendFinder accounts were affected, as well as over 60 million accounts from Cams.com. Other company holdings, such as Penthouse, Stripshow, and iCams were also breached, for a total of 412,214,295 affected users.

"The company kept 15 million deleted user accounts"

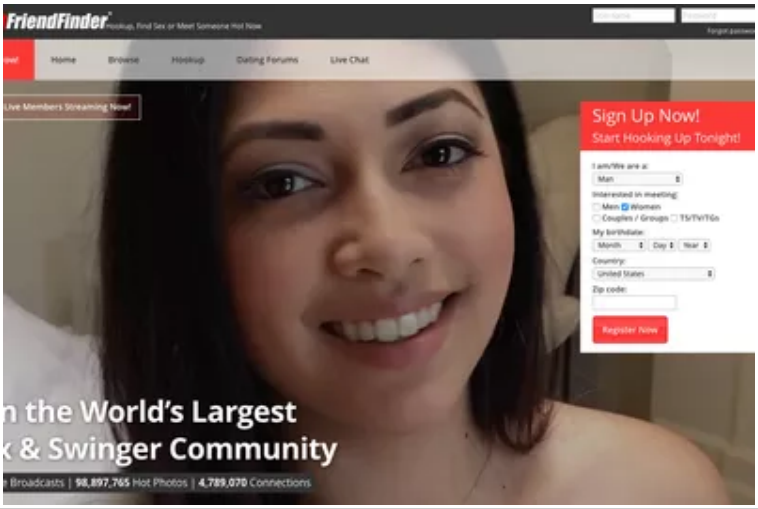
The hack also revealed that the company had kept information on 15 million accounts that users had deleted, as well as information on users for assets it no longer owned, such as Penthouse. By comparison, the Ashley Madison hack that took place in July 2015 revealed 32 million accounts, although that attack was also accompanied by a more aggressive extortion campaign.

According to *CSO Online,* a security researcher going by the name Revolver uncovered Local File Inclusion vulnerabilities on the site in October. Shortly thereafter, Friend Finder Network's vice president, and senior counsel of corporate compliance & litigation, Diana Lynn Ballou provided *CSO Online* with a statement: "We are aware of reports of a security incident, and we are currently investigating to determine the validity of the reports." This isn't the first time AdultFriendFinder has run into trouble: in May 2015, 3.5 million user accounts were exposed in another hack.

"User data was stored in plain visible format or with the insecure Secure Hash Algorithm 1 (SHA-1)"

According to *LeakedSource*, Friend Finder Network had stored their user passwords in plain visible format, or with Secure Hash algorithm 1 (SHA-1), which is not considered secure. According to *ZDNet*, which obtained a portion of the database and confirmed its legitimacy, the leaked information "does not appear to contain sexual preference data, unlike the 2015 breach." However, the site was able to see account usernames, emails, passwords, the last login, IP addresses, browser information, and other information.

Friend Finders Network did disclose to *ZDNet* that it had been aware of vulnerabilities and had taken steps to correct it. Reached by phone, a company representative noted that they could not disclose information about the breach, but that they would be in touch. We will update this story if we hear back.



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PA State Police issue clown threat bulletin

fox43.com

Posted 1:09 PM, October 4, 2016, by FOX43Updated at 01:17pm, October 4, 2016

HARRISBURG, Pa — PA State Police tweeted an advisory regarding the recent spate of clown sightings in the Commonwealth.

Here is the bulletin:

A number of clown related social media posts were displayed this past weekend regarding threats towards school districts in Pennsylvania and throughout the country. Some threats stated that a clown would arrive at the school and "shoot all students and teachers," while another threat stated they "weren't clowning around." Most of the social media posts were attributed to a "clown joke," possibly linked to numerous clown sightings throughout the nation and the world.



clowns

These sightings have not been validated and there are no known threats to schools in Pennsylvania. Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to their closest police department.

Over the last few months, "creepy clowns" have been reported throughout the United States and the world. The media has reported incidents where clowns have stood on the street not moving or speaking, to incidents where creepy clowns attempted to lure children into wooded areas. These sightings have occurred in Wisconsin, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Florida, Ohio, Tennessee, Missouri, Colorado, Oregon, and Texas.

Many of these reported clown sightings have little to no evidence establishing their legitimacy, but it is fueling a clown panic throughout the country.

Due to the media coverage of clown sightings, many people want to become involved in the phenomenon. Over the past two weeks at least 12 people were arrested in Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia for making false reports of clown threats or chasing people while costumed.

This is not the first time a clown scare has occurred in this country. In the 1980s, clown sightings were reported in Boston, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Arlington Heights, among many other areas. Upon further investigation, police noticed that most, if not all the clown sightings, were witnessed only by children between the ages of five and seven.

The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) is providing this bulletin for informational purposes only. The PSP encourages reporting of suspicious activity by calling the toll-free Pennsylvania State Police

(PSP) Terrorism Tip Line at (888) 292-1919, or via email at

tips@pa.gov.

Additionally, PSP launched the “See Something, Send Something” smartphone application (app) to help fight terrorism. The app allows suspicious activity to be captured as a photograph or written note and sent directly to PaCIC. Available at no cost to iPhone and Android users, the app also contains information on what to look for and when to report suspicious activity to be captured as a photograph or written note and sent directly to PaCIC. Available at no cost to iPhone and Android users, the app also contains information on what to look for and when to report suspicious activity.

SOURCE: PA State Police Community Awareness Bulletin

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Pack of mongoose interrupt European Tour golf event in South Africa

upi.com

By Daniel Uria | Nov. 10, 2016 at 4:02 PM



A pack of about 20 mongoose sprinted across the putting green at a European Tour event in South Africa without displacing the golfer's ball. The pack briefly interrupted play before continuing their sprint out of the area. Screen capture/The European Tour/Twitter

SUN CITY, South Africa, Nov. 10 (UPI) -- A pack of about 20 mongoose scampered across a golf course during a European Tour event in South Africa.

The European Tour's official Twitter account shared video of the horde as they briefly interrupted play.

"About 20 mongoose invade the green...But they know not to interfere with the ball," the European Tour wrote.

The pack quickly left the field of play and did not shift the position of the golfer's ball on the putting green at all, much to the delight of the commentators.

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THE CLEVELAND-STREET SCANDAL.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, January 17

THE LIBEL ON LORD EUSTON.

THE trial of Mr Ernest Parke for criminally libelling the Earl of Euston came on at the Old Bailey on Wednesday morning, before Mr Justice Hawkins and a special jury. The prosecutor arrived early, accompanied by his solicitor (Mr George Lewis), and the pair were presently joined by Sir Chas. Russell, Q.C., M.P., whose brief *on dit* was marked "five hundred guineas." Mr Lockwood, Q.C., M.P., and Mr Asquith, M.P., represented the defendant Parke, and several other barristers held watching briefs on behalf of parties whose names did not transpire.

Sir Chas. Russell opened the case for the prosecution with dry brevity, repeating the story of his client's visit to Cleveland-street which Lord Euston told at the Police Court. As his Lordship, said Sir Charles, had only been to the house once, and then but for a minute or two, nothing would have been easier than for him to have denied knowing anything at all of the place. He preferred, however, to be perfectly straightforward, and had frankly confessed to a grave imprudence.

In the plea of justification put in by the defendant it was alleged that Lord Euston had visited 19, Cleveland-street, on several occasions. The defence having taken that course, and elected practically to place Lord Euston on his trial, he (Sir C. Russell) proposed, subject to any view the learned judge might express upon the matter; not to call the prosecutor until they had seen by what evidence it was proposed to substantiate the plea of justification.

The judge remarked that he did not feel justified in expressing any opinion upon the point.

Mr Lockwood, Q.C., for the defence, commented on the course pursued by the prosecution in keeping the Earl of Euston out of the witness-box until there should have been a chance of discrediting by cross-examination the witnesses in support of the plea of justification. He agreed with Sir Charles as to the seriousness of the charge, and as to the seriousness of the plea put on the record by the defendant; but he proposed to place evidence before the jury that would satisfy them that Lord Euston had been in the habit of visiting 19, Cleveland-street. Some of the evidence might be open to the charge of being tainted, but it was obvious that in a case of this kind it was only evidence of that class that they could expect to find. As to the part of the plea of justification, which alleged that the publication of the libel was for the public good, he apprehended that, if the libel was shown to be true, there would be no substantial difference of opinion upon that point.

A number of persons residing in Cleveland-street and neighbourhood were then called and identified Lord Euston as an *habitue* of number 19. Being mostly ignorant working people, it was not a difficult task for Sir Charles Russell to confuse these witnesses and turn their evidence into ridicule.

The last witness called was a man named John Saul, who gave his evidence with a brazen effrontery that reduced the Court to shocked silence.

John Saul, replying to Mr Lockwood, said: I live at 15, Old Compton-street, Soho. In 1879 I knew a man named Chas. Hammond, who was then living at 25, Oxenden-street, off the Haymarket. He moved to 19, Cleveland-street, just after Christmas, 1886. At about the end of March I went to live there. During the time I was there I remember many persons coming to the house.

Do you see any person here in this Court whom you have seen at Hammond's house, 19, Cleveland-street, at any time?—One gent'eman I recognise that I took there myself if I am not thoroughly mistaken. (Witness here pointed to Lord Euston.)

When was that?—Some time at the end of April or the beginning of May, 1887.

Where did you meet this person?—In Piccadilly (not far from the Albany Courtyard, near Sackville-street—nearly opposite the Yorkshire Grey).

As the witness was proceeding to give evidence of a character which renders it unfit for publication, there was some demonstration of disapproval from that portion of the Court allotted to the public.

Mr Lockwood said he hoped his task would not be rendered more difficult by such exhibitions of feeling.

Mr Justice Hawkins said if this sort of thing was repeated he should order the Court to be cleared. The evidence was filthily brutal and disgusting, but it was necessary to hear it. So far as this witness was concerned he afforded a shocking spectacle.

Examination continued: I saw Lord Euston on a second occasion when Frank Hewett and Newlove were there.

Cross-examined by Sir C. Russell: Since just before Christmas I have been living at Akerman Road, Brixton, with a very respectable man named Violet, who is taking care of me. I gave my evidence to Inspector Abberline at the beginning of August. I met Violet at the private inquiry office at Westminster. I remember the prosecution of Newlove and Veck. I don't recollect Taylor, or Lovelock, or Swinscow, or Sladden, or Thickbroom, or Wright.

Have you any means of earning your bread?—No, sir.

I see you have a ring on your finger?—It's not my fault, or it would have been gone long ago. It's only paste. (Laughter.)

And a silver-headed cane?—Oh, that's not much—1s 6d, no more. I bought it in Brixton Road. Mr Violet lets me have money sometimes, and supplies me with everything I want. I was concerned in committing an indecent offence in Dublin in 1875, and since I have been in London I have tried to earn an honest living, but have not been able to get a character. The police and detectives have always been kind to me here. I offered my evidence in Dublin some years ago, but it was not used. I was employed a little while at Drury Lane Theatre in "The Royal Oak." I expressed my willingness to give evidence for Mr Parke, but for nobody else. I was not then aware that a considerable sum of money was being raised to help Mr Parke.

You don't suggest that you knew the defendant?—No; I thought he was acted very unfair with.

And your sense of justice prompted you to help him ?—Yes.

When you went to Webb's office, and made your statement, were any photographs produced ?—Yes, two.

Were they both photographs of Lord Euston ?—One was, and the other was a photograph of a man named Carrington.

Sir C. Russell observed that he had no intention of introducing other names, and regretted that the witness had mentioned any.

Mr Justice Hawkins agreed that it was undesirable to introduce the names of persons who were not before the Court.

Did you recognise the photograph of Lord Euston ?—Yes ; by his face, and by his big white teeth and his moustache.

Where did you first learn Lord Euston's name ?—Along Piccadilly, not long after I first met him.

In re-examination witness said he made his original statement to Inspector Abberline's clerk.

This closed the case for the defendant.

Lord Euston then went into the box, and denied having ever seen Saul before. He was severely cross-examined by Mr Asquith, but did not give away much.

Mr Lockwood then briefly addressed the jury on behalf of the defendant, severely criticised Lord Euston's moral estimate of "poses plastiques," and suggested that he had only admitted going to 19, Cleveland-street, once because he had reason to fear that on one occasion at least he had been observed. The story was one which he asked the jury unhesitatingly to reject, the more so because—apart from John Saul—Sir Charles Russell had failed to shake either the credibility or the respectability of the witnesses for the defence.

Sir C. Russell, on behalf of Lord Euston, submitted that the libel had been proved, and that the defendant had absolutely failed to establish his plea of justification. There had been laid before the Court

There had been laid before the Court loose and most unsatisfactory evidence of identification in connection with the alleged visits to Cleveland-street, while the foully-tainted testimony of John Saul was such that no one would imperil the life even of the meanest of God's creatures upon it. If a man's life were involved in this case he felt sure the jury would not accept it. Throughout this matter Lord Euston had behaved as an honest and straightforward man would behave.

The Judge summed up dead against the defendant, exposing clearly enough the extraordinary weakness of the luckless young journalist's case. Dealing with the plea of justification, His Lordship said there was not a particle of evidence to prove that Lord Euston left this country fearing arrest in connection with the Cleveland-street case. No evidence had been adduced to attempt to substantiate this allegation, and he was sorry it had been introduced. Five persons were called to state that they saw Lord Euston go in and out of the house in Cleveland-street. In cases of identity it was necessary that a witness should not only be honest but intelligently observant. The first witness could not recognise Lord Euston by his features, but picked him out by the prosecutor walking two or three yards along the Court. The second witness, Smith, said the man they saw go into the house was dressed in a dark frock coat, while O'Loughlin, who was with Smith at the time, said he wore a light grey suit. The photographs afterwards shown O'Loughlin depicted Lord Euston in a grey suit, and it was subsequent to seeing that that the witness swore he recognised the prosecutor at Hyde Park corner as the man seen in Cleveland-street. Smith knew Lord Euston by his trousers, which he said were baggy, but yesterday he wore a frock-coat, and from where the witness stood the extraordinary trousers—if existing—could not be seen. Then again Lord Euston was

6ft. 4in., and the witnesses had spoken of 5ft. 8in., a vast difference in the height of a man. The two pot-boys or barmen out of work, swore positively to seeing Lord Euston in Cleveland-street, and yet when the inquiry agent called upon them they were shown the photograph and asked "Is that the man you mean?' In all cases it was better to give witnesses an opportunity of relying upon their own knowledge rather than that the identification should be refreshed by the sight of the portrait of the person sought to be identified. No doubt Mrs Morgan had an opportunity of learning the character of the house in Cleveland-street, but although she had seen 50 or 60 persons enter the house the witness swore that the only person she would be able to recognise was Lord Euston. No doubt the jury would have liked to see the "man with a big stick," who took O'Loughlin to identify Lord Euston; "the little black man" who did the same with Mrs Morgan; and Captain Webb, whose name had been mentioned. Turning to the evidence of "that creature Saul," the learned judge said a more melancholy spectacle he had never witnessed. He hoped for the honour of the police of this city that it was not true that they had dealt kindly with him. Lord Euston had said that Saul's evidence was as foul a perjury as a man could commit. The jury would have to ask themselves whether they preferred the oath of a man who had committed crimes confessedly for which he might be sent to penal servitude (and he marvelled much that no one had suggested that the man should be prosecuted), or that of Lord Euston. The man Saul had stated that he was now under the care of someone, that he was living on the fat of the land, and that he — the vilest of vile creatures — was allowed to walk abroad. The man had sworn that in August he gave his statement with regard to Lord Euston to Inspector Abberline, and if confirmation of it

tor Abberline, and if corroboration of it could be obtained he (the learned judge), as one of the public, had a right to know why a warrant was not at once issued against Lord Euston. Failing corroboration of this creature's tale it would have been gross cruelty to Lord Euston to act upon it. The wretch's story had not been spoken to by any other witness. Saul had coupled the names of Hewitt and Newlove with that of Lord Euston. Hewitt had left the country, whether for good or bad, but Newlove, although not within the sound of his (the judge's) voice, was within the reach of the cab. Why had not the diligent inquiry office suggested that Newlove should have the photograph shown him? Beside that, not one singly individual who had ever been connected with the house in Cleveland-street had been called to speak to seeing Lord Euston in the house. Some of the boys were in the country, and could have been called. Whether high or low, rich or poor, every man was entitled to justice, and to say, "If you make a charge against me prove it." Another striking fact to be remembered was that since a certain date in 1887, although Saul had stated that he often saw Lord Euston in Piccadilly, he never had any communication with him; nor being pinched with poverty did he appeal for any money to the man who, if his story was true, was in his power. It was conceded that it was to the public interest that certain things should be made known, but it was to the last degree inexpedient, unjust, and cruel that matters reflecting seriously upon the character of an individual should be made public unless there was solid foundation for it. The whole question was whether Lord Euston had been proved a miscreant, or was he entitled to the verdict that the case had not been proved.

The jury retired at 1.5, and returned into Court at 1.45 with a verdict of Guilty, and that the justification was not proved.

In passing sentence, the Judge said that there was never a more atrocious libel. The prisoner had before him nothing more than rumour that Lord Euston had been guilty of an abominable crime, for which he would have been liable to be sent into penal servitude for life, a sentence which would have been hardly sufficiently expressive of the horror felt at a gentleman in his position being guilty of so wicked and grave a crime. The prisoner suggested he had other evidence. He could hardly credit the statement, and at least it was shown that the prisoner could place no reliance upon it. A plea which said that others advised the publication he would never tolerate. He had expressed himself as strongly as a man could do, and he felt compelled to say that he absolutely and entirely agreed with the verdict of the jury. He did not believe it would have been possible to find in England 12 men who, conscientiously, honestly, and carefully looking at the evidence, could have come to any other conclusion than that this was a wicked libel, published without any justification, and endeavoured to be supported by testimony absolutely unworthy of credence. He would pass a sentence which, he hoped, besides being a punishment, would be a warning to others not to publish such libels. The sentence would be one of twelve months' imprisonment.

The prisoner, who received his sentence with composure, was then removed to the cells.

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THE CLEVELAND-STREET SCANDAL.

AUCKLAND STAR, VOLUME XXI, ISSUE 54, 6 MARCH 1890

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Parrot reveals husband's affair with housemaid

metro.co.uk

Jen Mills for Metro.co.ukTuesday 25 Oct 2016 4:40 pm

A man almost ended up going to jail after a family pet exposed his affair with the housemaid.

The alleged affair came to light after the parrot started to repeat flirty phrases in front of his wife, who hadn't heard anything like this for some time.

She had wondered for a while about her husband's relationship with their maid at their home in Kuwait, according to Al Shahed Daily.

So when the bird started to parrot what it had overheard, she seized on it as evidence and went to police.

Adultery is illegal in the Gulf state, carrying a potential prison sentence or even hard labour.

If the bird's evidence had been admitted, he could have faced a severe penalty for his indiscretion.

But thankfully for him, the authorities said the squawkings could not be admitted in court, as it could not be proved that the bird hadn't heard the intimate conversation on TV or the radio.

It was not deemed a credible witness and the case did not proceed, even though the wife said she had suspected it for some time and that her husband became anxious if she arrived home unexpectedly from work.

Nevertheless, the case has made headlines around the world.

And it's not the first time a parrot has snitched.

In 2006, a bird reportedly revealed his owner Suzy's affair with a work colleague by shouting out 'I love you Gary' in front of her boyfriend – whose name was Chris.

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Part one: The Mysterious Brown Lady of Raynham Hall – who was she?

wordpress.com

https://hauntedpalaceblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/16/part-one-the-mysterious-brown-lady-of-raynham-hall-who-was-she/

The Haunted Palace

~ History, Reviews and the Supernatural

16 *Sunday* Oct 2016

This is a two-part post, examining the history, legend and paranormal sightings of the Brown Lady of Raynham Hall. Part one examines the historical basis of the legend.



Raynham Hall in Norfolk is one of the oldest buildings in the county and has been the home of the Townshend family for nearly 400 years. Built in 1619 by Sir Robert Townshend and believed to have been designed by Inigo Jones, the Italian style palatial mansion originally sat in an estate of 7000 acres[1].

The Hall is also the setting for one of the most famous hauntings in England as well as a photograph which for many people proved the existence of ghosts.

Witnesses have reported seeing the ghostly figure of an aristocratic lady wearing an old-fashioned brown dress at various locations in the house but in particular in the upstairs corridor, on the grand staircase and in one particular bedroom.

The Legend of the Brown Lady



The Brown Lady is believed to be the spirit of Dorothy Townshend, the second wife of Lord Townshend, sister of the famous Whig politician and first British Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole and aunt of the prolific writer, historian and politician, Horace Walpole.

The story goes that Dorothy fell deeply in love with the young Lord Charles Townshend who returning her feelings asked her father, Robert Walpole, for her hand in marriage. Robert who was also Townshend's guardian refused to give his permission afraid that people would think that he was using his guardianship for his own self-interest.

Heart-broken, Charles shortly afterwards married Elizabeth Pelham, daughter of the 1st Baron Thomas Pelham of Laughton. Elizabeth died in 1711 leaving Charles a widower with five surviving children. He was eventually reunited with Dorothy and the two married in 1713.

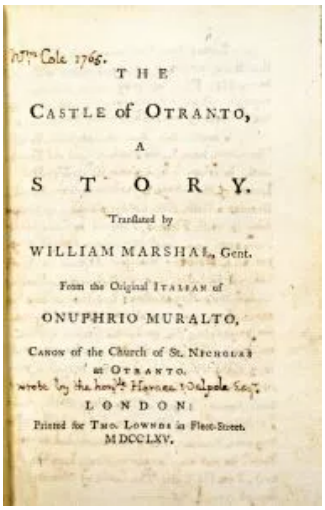
What Charles did not know was that during the time they had been apart, Dorothy had an affair with the notorious Lord Wharton (father of the infamous Philip, first Duke of Wharton, founder of one of the earliest Hell-fire Club's). When Charles eventually found out, he flew into a terrible rage. Locking Dorothy in her rooms, he forbade her from ever seeing her children again. Dorothy remained imprisoned for the rest of her life until her death in 1726 reportedly from smallpox[2].

Variations on a theme

Other versions differ slightly, in particular when it comes to Dorothy's death. One story purports that she died of a broken neck after falling or being pushed down the stairs whilst another insists that the funeral in 1726 was a sham and that Dorothy died years afterwards.

Whatever the truth behind the manner of Dorothy's death, the one point these stories all agree on is the belief that Dorothy never really left Raynham and that her spirit wanders the Hall looking for the children she was so cruelly separated from.

A Gothic Nightmare or a Misjudged Marriage



With the publication of Horace Walpole's 'Castle of Otranto' in 1764, Britain fell in love with a new genre of literature – the Gothic novel. Early gothic stories included elements of ancestral curses, rambling castles with hidden passages and supernatural elements. The gothic fever which gripped the nation was insatiable and new writers emerged on the scene such as Ann Radcliffe, author of the 'Mysteries of Udolpho' *(1794) "who introduced the brooding figure of the Gothic villain…a literary device that would come to be defined as the Byronic hero*"[3]. Later during the Victorian period the gothic genre developed culminating in some of the most famous books ever written such as Jane Eyre (Charlotte Bronte); Frankenstein (Mary Shelley) and Dracula (Bram Stoker). These together with novels such as The Woman in White (Wilkie Collins) and The Rose and the Key (Sheridan Le Fanu) which tapped into a growing fear amongst women of being locked away by ruthless mercenary male relatives and a fascination with the supernatural may have contributed to the rise of the Brown Lady legend.



Gothic elements abound in the Brown Lady tale; there is the violent husband; the beautiful wronged woman locked away; the charming but devious villain who defiles a virtuous young woman; the manipulative wife who helps her husband in his schemes; an old house; a suspicious death.

Was there any truth in the stories and rumours surrounding Dorothy Walpole life and death or were various strands of the story twisted and moulded into a gothic tale? Does the historical evidence support the legend? Is it possible that the greatest politician of the era would have allowed his sister to be locked away or possibly murdered without batting an eyelid? Was Charles Townshend really so cruel and despotic? There are so many questions unanswered.

Introducing The Principle Players…

Lady Dorothy Townshend (née Walpole)



Dorothy 'Dolly' Walpole was born on the 18 September 1686 at Houghton Hall in Norfolk to a wealthy landowning family. She was the thirteenth child of Mary Burwell and Colonel Robert Walpole, a Whig politician who represented the district of Castle Rising.

Little is known about her early life but at some point she fell in love with her father's ward, Charles Townshend. As previously mentioned, her father turned down their request to marry[4]. Dorothy would have been about 10 or 11 years old at this point. Although that seems really young to us now, in the 17th century the legal age for marriage was 12 for a girl and 14 for a boy. In practice even if a match was made at such an early age, consummation of the marriage did not occur until a few years later.



Raised in a family deeply involved in politics, it is highly probable that she mixed with important Whig politicians and their families including Lord Wharton. The story of Dorothy's affair with Wharton is seen as the catalyst for the events that followed with some even suggesting that the relationship may have been resumed after Dorothy's marriage to Townshend. Although the evidence does suggest that Dorothy did have a mild flirtation with Wharton whether or not the relationship went any further will never be known.

Two years after the death of Townshend's first wife in 1711 Dorothy finally got her wish and with the permission of her brother, Robert Walpole, married her first love Charles Townshend in a magnificent ceremony at Raynham Hall. During their thirteen years of marriage they had seven children with six reaching adulthood.

Not much is known about their marriage but in 2009 in an interview given by Lord Raynham to BBC Norfolk he refuted the idea that Dorothy had been ill-treated "*People said that Dorothy was locked away and badly treated, but in the 1960s we uncovered paperwork and medical reports suggesting she had a happy life and was much loved*"[5].

Most of what we can gather about Dorothy's personality and life can be found in the remarks made by her contemporaries when they heard about her death from smallpox. One commentator describes her as an elegant and accomplished woman with engaging manners whose death is a great loss to her husband and family[6] and who used her influence to keep the peace between her husband and her brother. Another stated that she was "*generally and justly lamented for her uncommon merit and the accomplishments that adorned her mind as well as her person*"[7]. Lastly in a letter to Mr Walpole, Lord Waldegrave expresses his sadness at Lady Townshend's death and recalls how on a trip to Hanover where she accompanied her husband as part of the king's party she acted "*with so much good humour, into the ways of the country, that she pleased everybody to*

admiration"[8]. It is really hard from these comments to see this Dorothy as the same Dorothy who was so violently abused that she was locked away and possibly murdered.

Lord Charles Townshend (2nd Viscount Townshend)



Charles Townshend was born on the 18 April 1674 and succeeded his father to the peerage at the early age of thirteen. He was educated at Eton College and then at King's College at Cambridge and as he grew up became deeply involved with the Whig cause. In November 1708 he was promoted to Captain of the Yeoman of the Guard and helped to negotiate the Treaty of Utrecht. He was favoured by George I and his standing with the king only increased when the policies he formed helped to crush the Jacobite Rising in 1715 resulting in him being given the position of Secretary of State for the Northern Department. With the exception of a brief period when he fell out of favour with the king, he held the position of Secretary of State for the rest of his political life and remained at the forefront of politics until differences of opinion with Sir Robert Walpole led him to abandon politics and retire to his estate at Raynham Hall, where he lived until his death in 1738[9].

In the story of the Brown Lady, Charles Townshend is portrayed as a violent man who had trouble controlling his temper. A description of Townshend the politician states that he "*was frank, impetuous and overbearing, long accustomed to dictate in the cabinet and fond of recommending violent measures*"[10]. The picture that emerges of Townshend is of a wily, determined and intractable man who could be ruthless when he had to be – but that could describe any politician, no man could reach such a powerful position in that tumultuous climate by being a soft pushover.

On his retirement from politics, Townshend became heavily involved in agricultural developments. He became the champion of turnips as a new winter fodder crop for cattle and introduced large-scale turnip production on his estate. As a result he was given the name of 'Turnip' Townshend.



Again the evidence from contemporary sources contradicts the image of an abusive and evil husband. He is described as having retired with a "*most unsullied character for integrity, honour and disinterestedness, and gave several striking proofs that he could command the natural warmth of his temper*" and that his hospitality endeared him to his neighbours and the dignity of his character earned everyone's respect[11].

The question is would Robert Walpole have allowed his sister to marry a man with such an unpleasant character? Possibly, Walpole himself had a difficult relationship with his first wife and is known to have treated her badly, and the marriage did cement an alliance between two exceptionally powerful men and two important families. It is also more than likely that Walpole held a traditional view of a woman's place i.e. the husband was responsible for his wife and that no one else had the right to interfere in their personal affairs. It is interesting that Townshend's jealously of Walpole rising above him led to a permanent rift between the two only after Dorothy's death. It might be that the loss of their intermediary left no-one to hold the now fragile alliance together, (often families fall apart when an important member dies). There is no evidence that their arguments were caused by Walpole blaming Townshend for his sister's death

and would have Walpole allow his sister to be held prisoner for years? It seems unlikely but then again no-one knows what goes on behind closed doors.

Lady Lucy Wharton



Lucy Wharton was the second wife of Lord Thomas Wharton and heiress to the vast Rathfarnham estates in Ireland. She was the daughter of Adam Loftus, 1st Viscount Lisburne, a man who was described as hot-tempered, a compulsive gambler and a heavy drinker[12]. Worth £5000 a year, Lucy married Wharton shortly after the death of his first wife, Ann in 1685.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (who had an affair with Lucy's son, Philip) was not a fan of Lucy describing her as well suited to Lord Wharton, "*unfeeling and unprincipled; flattering and fawning, canting, affecting prudery and even sanctity, yet in reality as abandoned and unscrupulous as her husband himself*"[13].

Not only did both Lady Wharton and her husband turn a blind eye to each other's affairs but Lady Wharton was not above helping her husband to seduce innocent girls "*his character was so infamous, and his lady's subservience so notorious, that no young woman could be four and twenty hours under their roof with safety to her reputation"**[14]***.

One of the stories about Dorothy is that somehow Lady Wharton was responsible for entrapping her at Raynham Hall. The origin of this story may stem from an episode which occurred during Dorothy and Wharton's brief flirtation before her marriage when Lady Wharton lured her to the Wharton's London residence knowing that it would ruin the girl's reputation. Apparently Robert Walpole heard a whisper that something was in the air and stormed over to the house and removed his sister by force.

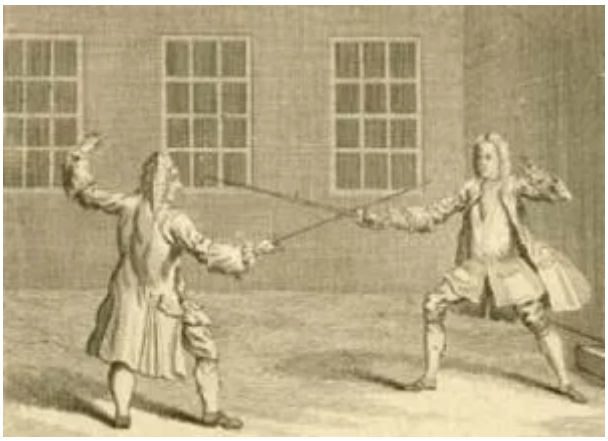
Eventually Lord Wharton became tired of his wife and banished her to a small brick tower in the garden of his mansion at Winchendon in Buckinghamshire[15]. So in a strange way she was banished to some sort of gothic residence but not as a prisoner!

Lord Wharton



Lord Thomas Wharton was born in August 1648 to a wealthy and powerful family. Wharton was a clever and distinguished Whig politician and virulently anti-Catholic. He sided with the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate son of Charles II, in his campaign to be named as his father's heir in place of the Catholic James II and was instrumental in William, the Dutch Prince of Orange being crowned as king rather than as a consult to Mary. He was also behind the Hanoverian accession and involved in the 1707 Act of Union with Scotland. Despite his decadent ways and occasionally falling out of favour (i.e. Queen Ann disliked him intensely especially after the Barrington Affair when he along with some friends broke into the church and relieved and defecated on the altar and pulpit), he somehow always managed to rise to the top.

Wharton was a libertine, a brilliant swordsman, a debaucher and when he needed to be a manipulative liar. He was sarcastically nicknamed 'Honest Tom' as it was believed that no one could trust him "*of all the liars of his time he was the most deliberate, the most inventive, and the most circumstantial"****[16]***.



In 1673 he married Ann, granddaughter of Anne St John, the Dowager Duchess of Rochester. It comes to something when probably the most notorious libertine of the age, the Duke of Rochester actually tried to prevent his beloved niece from marrying Wharton. Ann was bookish, clever, a poet and a writer, completely different from Wharton. Neglected by Wharton, in favour of his numerous mistresses, she died in intense pain and misery from syphilis. It is rumoured that Wharton refused to tell Ann that he was infected.

Wharton's mercurial character was one that aroused deep hatred in some, admired by others and definitely not a man to offend. To the Tories he was almost a satanic figure. Jonathan Swift, whose deep animosity towards Wharton increased when Wharton passed him over for preferment, wrote a number of pieces on the 'diabolical' Wharton and called him "*the most universal villain I ever knew*"[17].

Wharton died in 1715 and left his son by his second wife, Philip as his successor. Swift's wish that "*May it please god to shorten the life of Lord Wharton, And set up his son in his place*"[18] eventually came true but if his hope was that the son would somehow atone for the father he would have been sadly disappointed as Philip earned a reputation which equaled and maybe surpassed that of his father as the founder of the Hellfire Club.

In many ways Wharton does fit the image of the Gothic villain; dynamic, charming and dangerous but then again being a drinker, gambler and libertine in the 17th century was like wearing flared trousers in the 70s, nearly everyone was doing it. Was Wharton worse than others – maybe, maybe not! It is probably best to leave the last word on Wharton to an anonymous source who wrote,*"A monster, whom no vice can bigger swell, Abhor'd by Heaven and long since due in Hell"*[19].

So was Dorothy the tragic victim of a vicious plot? – I leave it to people to draw their own conclusions!



In part two of the Mysterious Brown Lady of Raynham Hall, Miss Jessel will examine evidence for the sightings of her wandering spirit, and will consider whether the famous Country Life photograph, believed by many to provide proof of the existence of ghosts, can be taken at face value.

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2 thoughts on “Part one: The Mysterious Brown Lady of Raynham Hall – who was she?”

1.

Lenora *said:*

October 16, 2016 at 4:16 pm

Thank you Miss Jessel, another fascinating post. Looking forward to reading the second part of your feature looking at the purported sightings of the Brown Lady.

2.

busterggi *said:*

October 21, 2016 at 7:04 pm

They don’t make ghost like that anymore.

Blog at WordPress.com.

Part Two: The Mysterious Brown Lady of Raynham Hall – sightings wordpress.com

https://hauntedpalaceblog.wordpress.com/2016/10/29/part-two-the-mysterious-brown-lady-of-raynham-hall-sightings/

The Haunted Palace

~ History, Reviews and the Supernatural

Part Two: The Mysterious Brown Lady of Raynham Hall – sightings

29*Saturday*Oct 2016

In part two of the Mysterious Brown Lady of Raynham Hall, Miss Jessel examines sightings of her wandering spirit, and considers whether the famous Country Life photograph, believed by many to provide proof of the existence of ghosts, can be taken at face value. To read part one, click here The Mysterious Brown Lady of Raynham Hall, part one: who was she?

A Debut Performance



The first attested appearance of the Brown Lady at Raynham Hall was during a Christmas gathering in 1835 held by Lord Charles Townshend. Lucia C. Stone and Colonel Loftus were amongst those invited. One evening after a game of chess, the men decided to retire to bed. On the way to their bedrooms they noticed the outline of a woman wearing an old fashioned brown dress standing in the doorway of one of the rooms. Suddenly she disappeared into thin air. The following evening Loftus saw the same figure again but this time he managed to study her appearance more closely. According to Loftus she appeared to be a genteel woman with an aristocratic bearing but to his horror her eyes seemed to have been gouged out "*dark in the glowing face*"[1].

The Captain and the Ghost

Interest in the Brown Lady began to grow as Stone and Loftus' story circulated and more and more people reported having seen her. In 1836, the author and Royal Navy captain, Frederick Marryat visited Raynham as part of a hunting party. A sceptic, Marryat was determined to prove that the haunting had been a trick by local smugglers to keep strangers away. He asked to be put in the room which contained the painting of the woman who Loftus was convinced he had seen.

The first two nights passed without incident and he was given no opportunity to use the gun which he kept hidden under his pillow. On the evening of the third night just as he was changing for bed he heard a knock on the door. Two of the company had come to ask Marryat's opinion on a new gun recently arrived from London. After examining the gun, the men decided to accompany Marryat back to his room and joked that he should take the gun with him to protect himself from the Lady[2].

The three men were making their way along the dark and gloomy corridor when suddenly they saw the figure of a melancholy woman carrying a light approaching them. Thinking that it was one of the





ladies in their party, the half-dressed Marryat for the sake of modesty hid himself in the space between the double doors of one of the bedrooms. The two other men joined him. As she approached, Marryat recognised her as the woman from the portrait in his bedroom. Never a man to cower in fear, he kept his finger firmly on the trigger intending to confront her and demand an explanation for her presence. Before he could do so, the apparition stopped in front of where Marryat and the others were concealing themselves. She turned to face him and "*grinned in a malicious and diabolical manner…*"[3]. Marryat shot and the woman vanished, the bullet lodging in the door across the way. A shaken Marryat never tried to challenge the Brown Lady again.

Captured on Camera

Over the following 100 years numerous witnesses claimed to having seen or felt the presence of the Brown Lady at the Hall including in 1926 when Lady Townshend and her son saw the Lady on the staircase.



Ten years later on the 19th September 1936 the Country Life photographer Captain Hubert C. Provand and his assistant Indre Shira were taking pictures for an article. They claim that they had already taken a photograph of the staircase when Shira noticed a strange mist like essence coming towards them. Gradually the vapour solidified to form the figure of a woman. Shira instantly gave directions to Provand who quickly took the cap off the lens whilst Shira pressed the flash trigger[4]. Together the two men claimed to have captured on film definitive proof of the existence of ghosts. The image appeared in the 26th December 1936 edition of the magazine and again in the 4th January 1937 edition. The image is considered one of the most famous ghost photographs ever taken and the negative is still held in the Country Life archives[5].

A Ghostly Image or Clever Fake?

Since the photograph of the Brown Lady was taken, the image has come under intense scrutiny. At the time the paranormal investigator, Harry Price, interviewed both Provand and Shira and concluded that the men had not conspired to deceive the public and that the photograph was genuine[6].

Since then many other theories have been put forward to explain the image including that the photographers smeared grease on the negative, that it was due to double exposure, that it was the movement of a person (living) on the stairs who was captured during the exposure and that light accidently got into the camera.



This might just be a fake…..

Investigators John Fairley and Simon Welfare claim that on examining the image they could discern a pale line above each stair-tread which indicates that one picture has been superimposed over the other. Others agreeing with Fairley and Welfare have suggested that the image looks like a standard Virgin Mary statue and that on close study you can see that the hands of the woman are clasped in prayer, that the dress is typical of the v-shaped garments carved in those statues and that even the pedestal on which the statue stands can be clearly seen[7].

Many others even today believe that the photograph is genuine including Lord Raynham who is convinced that Dorothy's spirit does remain in the house "*she isn't there to haunt the house but she is still there I know she's there and I'm glad she's around*"***[8]***.

Is the Brown Lady an angry, suffering spectre whose miserable life has bound her to the house which became a prison or a loving spirit staying in the home where she lived a happy life or simply a tale to titillate visitors? I again leave it to others to decide.

Dorothy Walpole's Wandering Spirit

Raynham Hall is not the only place where the spirit of Dorothy has been seen. The ghost of a young Dorothy has been seen occasionally at Sandringham House whilst a Royal guest claimed to have been visited by a terrifying vision. A young George IV whilst staying at Houghton awoke in the middle of the night to see the ghost of the Brown Lady at the foot of the bed. It is claimed that the Prince of Wales left the Hall immediately declaring that he would "*not spend another hour in the accursed house, for tonight I have seen that which I hope to god I never see again*"[9].



Lady Dorothy Townsend nee Walpole.

Other Ghostly Residents of Raynham Hall

The 'camera shy' Brown Lady has not been seen since the photograph was taken in 1936 but other apparitions have including the ghosts of a cocker spaniel, two children and the Duke of Monmouth.



The Duke of Monmouth, the housewife's choice…

An elderly spinster claims to have been visited by the Duke of Monmouth whilst she was spending a night at Raynham and found the experience both flattering and agreeable – the mind boggles![10]

Happy Halloween!

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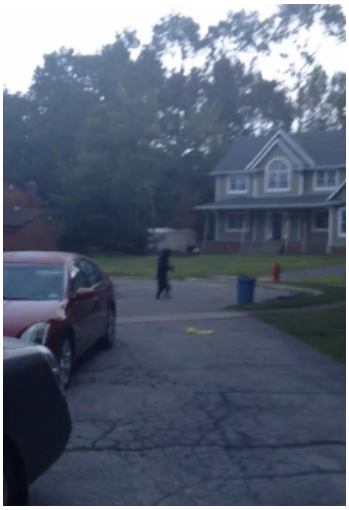
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Pedals the bipedal bear is dead

doubtfulnews.com

DOUBTFUL NEWS
Can you really believe this stuff?
Doubtful News

October 14, 2016



Pedals taking a walk

Back in August of 2014, we brought you the story of a bear spotted in New Jersey suburbs walking on two legs while searching for easy food in garbage cans. “Pedals” the bear had a severely injured front paw and had adapted a quite adequate bipedal gate. Pedals reappeared in October 2015 and several people collected funds to move him to a wildlife sanctuary as it was assumed it was not easy for the bear to survive. The NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife rejected the proposal to tranquilize and put the bear into captivity, preferring to take the approach that the bear live out its existence in the wild, hardship or not.



Pedals was frequently captured in photos around homes.

It’s a year later and at the end of this week’s black bear season, rumors circulated that Pedals had been killed in the hunt. The NJ wildlife department was deluged with calls about it and provided a statement saying that they had no way of verifying that the exact bear had been harvested and noted “multiple bears [were] observed at different check stations with injured or missing limbs.”

Apparent confirmation was released on Pedals facebook page that the bear was killed by a bow hunter who had been deliberately trying to take him for years.

> There are many hunters who feel Pedals should have been taken to sanctuary, many who felt he should have amnesty from the hunt, many who would never think to kill him and many who saw first hand when he was brought in to Greenpond station on Monday. These people were kind enough to share details with us.
>
> PEDALS IS DEAD. The hunter who has wanted him dead for nearly 3 years had the satisfaction of putting an arrow through him, bragging at the station. The very place

> where they weighed him, examined his legs, confirmed it was “the bi-pedal”. Where there were two biologists on hand taking many many pictures.

This page had previously included pleas by many for hunters to honor Pedals’ persistency for existence and have some compassion. They concluded by listing the names and contact info of state officials for concerned citizens to voice their opinion on what could have been done and ask that this situation not re-occur.

While our original story focused on the fact that an upright bear could concievably be responsible for reports of Bigfoot, this story has turned into something totally different. In it, we see people applying human emotion to animals, making several unsupported assumptions, and deciding what is best for a wild animal regardless of other’s rights and what is actually best for the bear population. The story makes me sad too, and I do wish that Pedals had made it to that sanctuary. But, the truth is that black bear populations are booming and they inhabit the same area as humans creating a potential for damage to property, and injury and death to both bears and humans. We must understand what it means to co-exist with large, dangerous animals. To make Pedals out to be a big Teddy bear is an egregious error. To make concessions to co-exist with wildlife is reasonable but requires expertise from wildlife biologists and some difficult decisions. With increasing confrontations with bears, wolves and mountain lions, all of which can be dangerous to humans, we must become educated in aspects of the problem, using facts and reasoning, to make informed, not emotional, decisions about wildlife management.

RIP, Pedals. I think you taught us several lessons.

Thanks to Ron Bolton for the story tip.

idoubtit

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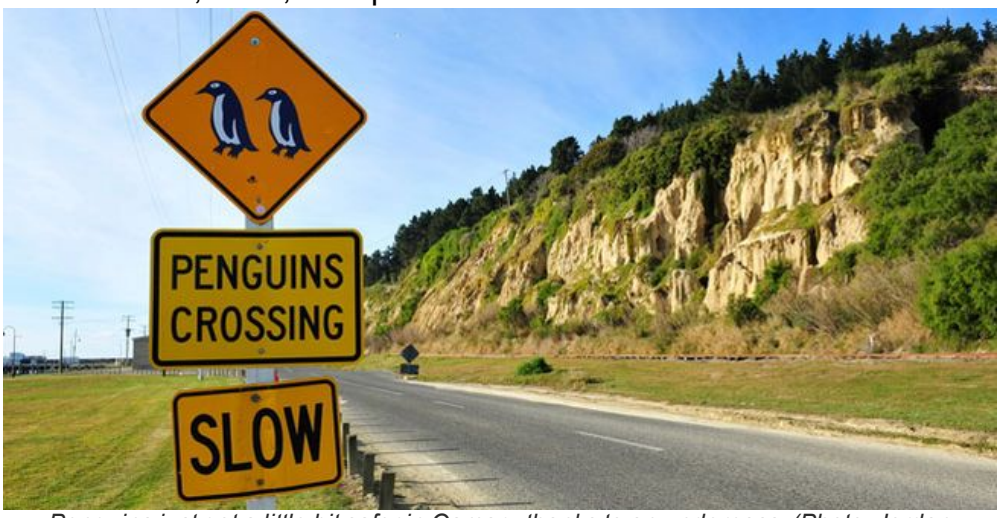
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Town builds New Zealand's first penguin tunnel

mnn.com

Tiny blue penguins have their own tunnel to protect them from traffic.

Noel Kirkpatrick
November 11, 2016, 2:17 p.m.



Penguins just got a little bit safer in Oamaru thanks to an underpass. (Photo: Jordan Tan/Shutterstock)

Being a penguin in Oamaru Harbor just got a little bit safer.

Located in New Zealand, Oamaru Harbor has been the home to a colony of blue penguins since the early 1990s after they took up residence in a defunct quarry. These tiny little birds that only grow to be a foot tall traversed the same road along the city's waterfront each day, heading to the sea at first light and returning across the busy street at dusk. Despite efforts to steer the birds to safer areas, the penguins proved to be "very habitual" in their routes, Philippa Agnew, a marine biologist who works at the Oamaru Blue Penguin Colony, told the Otago Daily Times.

In addition to traffic, human sightseers posed a problem as well. Mayor Gary Kircher explained to NewsHub, "People who are wanting to stop and see them, people who are wanting to actually leave the place, and they've all got to wait for the penguins."

So keep the penguins safe along their preferred route and to minimize traffic congestion, Oamaru Harbory decided to make things safer for the penguins by building an 80-foot-long underpass tunnel, a first for New Zealand.

The construction project began in late September. Power and waterlines that were already along the penguins' route were relocated so the tunnel could be built, and local companies donated materials and labor to the project, making it a community effort.

By Nov. 3, the overpass was open for travel. Lights were set up to help the penguins navigate the tunnel and cameras were placed near the tunnel to monitor its use. The cameras also give us a chance to say "Awww" as the penguins waddle their way to their nests.

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Penis severed, man shot and yet there's silence

torontosun.com

By Joe WarmingtonToronto Sun

First posted: Tuesday, November 08, 2016 05:21 PM EST | Updated: Tuesday, November 08, 2016 05:28 PM EST



Toronto Police released this image of a man believed of being the shooter in an incident on Mercer St. early Saturday, Nov. 6, 2016.



TORONTO - Only in Toronto could 20 people witness a man having his penis cut off followed by five gunshots and no one saw or heard anything.

Not surprising since 'snitches end up with stitches' is Toronto's street motto.

In this bloody incident, just before 4 a.m. Saturday on Mercer St. near John St., there's now two men in hospital with stitches — one set sewed back a man's severed penis. The other victim had major surgery to repair the damage caused by a bullet going into his stomach.

Toronto Police said in a news release Tuesday: "During the fight, a man from the first group stabbed a 38-year-old man from the second group" and "a man from the first group then shot a 26-year-old man from the second group."

The stabbed man jumped on a rented party bus before being rushed to hospital. An ambulance came to save the gunshot victim — four of the other shots could have ricochetted into the windows of a condo building.

It is believed the shooter fled on foot. Police have released a photograph of a suspect who they describe as a "black man ... wearing a red puffy, down-filled jacket, dark pants, and a dark shirt."

Since there are no snitches, the shooter and stabber are both at large.

"About 20 witnesses were right there and said they saw nothing," said Det.-Const. Chris Hominuk, of Toronto Police's 52 Division. "Some said they were sleeping on the bus, but it is kind of hard to sleep through five gunshots."

Or to enjoy a peaceful slumber with the shrieking sounds of a man losing his penis.

"The victim of the stabbing suffered grievous, life-changing injuries," is all Hominuk would confirm.

But other police sources tell me this man was attacked after someone got upset over something said to some females who were part of a group on a licensed party bus that had originated in Vaughan.

"The doctors did work hard to reattach his penis," said a source.

Luckily for him, while his own friends and other Entertainment District revellers seemed to miss this terrifying mayhem outside a club, a man from Chicago saw everything and wasn't going to cover up such a crime for any silly unwritten rule from Toronto's mean streets.

"The visitor was terrific," said Hominuk. "He said he's from Chicago, where there have been more than 3,000 shootings this year and tens of thousands in his life, and he'd never seen one until he came to Toronto."

Unlike those who are in essence aiding and abetting dangerous people, this man did the right thing.

Thanks, in part, to the evil street code there's been 59 homicides so far in 2016 compared to 42 at this time last year. Toronto's 59th murder, of an American tourist, happened on the same night as this violence — just north in Little Italy. So far this year Toronto has had 359 shootings compared to 248 at this time in 2015. It's a 45% increase. We have seen 514 shooting victims, up 93% over last year's 266.

Of our homicides, 33 of them have been by gun — which is 12 more than this time last year or 57%. As for people wounded in shootings, we have now had 199 compared to 51 in 2015. That's an almost 290% increase.

It's obscene. It's not just the people on the party bus who should wake up. Still, this incident is, sadly, routine. There's a shooting in Toronto every day now.

And many stabbings too.

Obviously, police are asking for assistance in helping identify the suspects in the Entertainment District melee on Saturday.

"There are people who know who both of these suspects are," Hominuk said.

If they can't help police when a man loses his privates, what the hell could ever urge empathy from people?

jwarmington@postmedia.com

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Pesky peacocks pose problems for Newton's neighbors in Vegas

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressNovember 13, 2016



FILE - In this Friday, Nov. 12, 2010, file photo, Wayne Newton shows some of the memorabilia in the Red Room during an interview at his home in Las Vegas. Feathers are flying in the neighborhood around Newton’s estate, where residents are complaining that peafowl like the ones on the Las Vegas showman's 40-acre ranch have become roosting and roaming pests. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson, File)

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LAS VEGAS (AP) — Feathers are flying in the neighborhood around Wayne Newton's estate, where residents are complaining that peafowl like the ones on the Las Vegas showman's 40-acre ranch have become roosting, roaming pests.

Residents who live near Casa de Shenandoah claim peafowl from the ranch wander the neighborhood — squawking, scratching family cars and creating a traffic hazard.

"We heard something on our roof that scared us to death," April Juelke told the Las Vegas Review-Journal (http://bit.ly/2fGdRrC). "We thought a burglar was breaking in, but it was a bunch of peacocks."

The Juelkes and others say the birds roost at the ranch. The couple say their Labrador retriever, Reginald Winthorp, has twice had intestinal illnesses that they blame on bird droppings.

Newton's lawyer, Jay Brown, said the birds aren't Newton's.

"We've never bought a peacock. We've never brought in a peacock," Brown said.

Sure, peacocks and hens were among the exotic menagerie the iconic "Mr. Las Vegas" headliner kept when he lived at the ranch southeast of the Las Vegas Strip. Among them were Arabian horses, penguins, a Capuchin monkey named Boo, and wallabies.

Brown said peafowl were already at the ranch when Newton bought the property in the '60s.

Casa de Shenandoah is officially home to about 25 peafowl that are tagged and live in an enclosure, Brown said.

Newton no longer lives at the estate, which today is a tourist museum focused on Newton's life and career.

Brown said the Newtons are willing to help remove the wild birds, but it wasn't their responsibility.

"These are feral peacocks," he said. "It's a neighborhood problem, not a Newton problem, in fairness."

Neighbor Bart Donovan, a member of a local advisory board, sees it differently.

"These things were born on the Newton property, they live there, they roost there at night," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, they're their birds."

Donovan said he fears the birds wandering in roadways could cause serious accidents.

The exact number of wild peafowl roaming the area around the ranch is unknown. Clark County code enforcement officials guess there are between 20 and 30, the Review-Journal reported.

Compounding the problem is that peafowl have an average life span of 20 years, according to the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden, and peahens can lay three to eight eggs at a time.

"My view is, if we don't stay on top of this, it will become more of a problem because the animals do breed," said Clark County Commissioner Mary Beth Scow, who represents the district. "I know when I was out there, I saw several young peafowl."

County commissioners spent more than 30 minutes at a recent meeting discussing how to best handle the problem.

Animal control has a cage large enough to capture peafowl, but commissioners decided its staff is too small to constantly monitor the trap.

And once the peafowl are caught, there remains the question of what to do with them.

Nevada Department of Wildlife spokesman Doug Nielsen said his agency can't help. He compared the situation to someone raising a pet duckling and releasing it at a local park after it matures.

"At this point, the community is going to have to figure it out and decide what they want to do," Nielsen said.

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Information from: Las Vegas Review-Journal, http://www.lvrj.com

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A Look Back: Chile's Millennium Humanoids



Tuesday, September 23, 2014



Several Latin American nations experienced a substantial increase of humanoid sighting at the turn of the millennium. Mexico was starting to see increased reports of 'flying humanoids'. Brazil residents consistently reported UFOs and odd creatures that these craft transported. In Argentina, witnesses described several strange human-like creatures that varied in size and appearance.

In the following post, I will again concentrate on Chile and the overwhelming number of humanoid/mothman/hominid encounters reported throughout 1999-2001. Much of this information was provided by Humanoid Sighting Reports & Journal of Humanoid Studies:

Las Cascadas, Chile - March 2000 - night

For several nights in a row witnesses at a local residence spotted large red blinking lights land on a nearby field. Soon after tall man like figures, bald headed, wearing white tunics and dark goggles approach the house and look inside, and they then ran back to the field without making any noise. Their bodies appear to emit electric discharges as they move.

Source: Caroline Uribe Assef, Diario Llanquille Chile

Laguna Redonda, Concepcion, Chile - May 3, 2000 - 1:30am

The barking of five stray puppies shed had picked up some time earlier suddenly awakened Professor Liliana Romero Castillo. The puppies were living in the courtyard with her fierce mastiff. She looked through the window to see the back of what appeared to be an immense man, standing more than 6-feet 8 inches tall. The shoulder blades were split, as if he had wings. He appeared to be hunched over as if choking somebody. After attempting to wake up her husband without success, she looked out the window again but the tall winged creature was gone. The next day some of the children found a dead dog in the alleyway. It appeared to have puncture marks on the throat area.

Source: UFO Roundup Vol. 5 #19

Baquedano Chile - May 30, 2000 - 6:00am

37-year old Evelyn Esbry woke up early in the morning in order to use the toilet facilities located outside in the terrace. On her way there she heard sounds coming from the patio area. Suddenly an entity jumped on her back, paralyzed with fear she turned around to see a bizarre hairy creature, with a large nozzle, about 4-feet tall, and with large luminous orange, oval shaped eyes. Terrified, Evelyn fainted and did not see the creature depart. She suffered from shock and was treated at the local hospital for deep scratches. The victim told local paramedics that the creature seemed to communicate with her, using telepathy telling her not to scream.

Source: Paranigma Chile



Baquedano, Chile - June 2000 - night

Upon hearing the frenetic barking of his dogs, security guard (involved in a previous encounter) Luis Alberto Calivar armed himself with a flashlight and a knife and went outside to investigate, as he did the dogs suddenly became very still. Soon his lights illuminated a dark greenish form that ran very quickly climbing up a Wasintonia palm. As he shone the flashlight at the figure he felt his arm become "cold" and the knife and watch dropped out of his hand, at the same time the dogs stood very quiet and still. A feeling of numbness overcame his body and he ran back inside his security shack, he was followed by the dogs that hid under the room and began to shake in fear. He could only describe the creature as having large flopping ears, fluid in nature, apparently without a bone structure (!), it gave the appearance of being a flexible mass that moved around like a Kangaroo. It moved silently and was about 1.30m in height. When he first spotted the creature it seemed to have been crouching down, behind a bush. It seemed to twist its body around and never looked straight at the witness, which never dropped his flashlight. Incredibly despite the reactions the witness felt no fear and did not notice any odors coming from the creature. The encounter lasted about 5 minutes and the creature was about 9 meters away from the witness. He further described the creature as having greenish hairs about 5 to 6cm in length. Soon after the encounter Calivar had too see a doctor and lost about 20 pounds.

Source: Ramon Navia, "La Verdad Oculta"

Villa Nonguen, Concepcion, Chile - June 7, 2000 - 4:00am

Julio Reyes and wife Carmen Andrade were awaken by noises coming from the backyard, which contained a hen house and a garden. Looking out they saw bizarre humanoid flapping a pair of large wings. The creature was described as white in color. It ran towards the rear of the house. The guard dog refused to follow it out. Several hens were found dead and strange footprints were also located.

Source: UFO Roundup Vol. 5 #24

Tocopilla, Chile - June 18, 2000 - midnight

***(more detail below)** - A group of young people was on the beach sitting by a bonfire. Suddenly, a large creature came out of the water. They were all astonished as they saw the strange being getting closer. The creature approached one of them making several guttural sounds, as if was trying to communicate with the young man. Moments later, it placed its right hand on the young man's left shoulder, leaving a green stain on his sweater, which they described as the same color as marine algae. The Bigfoot-like creature soon left, as it got back in the water and disappeared in the dark. The eyewitnesses, whom they preferred to remain anonymous, described the creature as 8 feet tall, with long dark furry hair, long arms with hands below the knees, big round eyes, with a long nose and mouth shaped like an animal muzzle.

Source: Virgilio Sanchez Ocejo, Miami UFO Center

Maria Elena, Chile - June 28 2000 - evening

Several witnesses including investigator Jaime Ferrer were leaving a local restaurant through the back door when they all saw a strange looking bird-like creature in the sky. It was flying at an altitude of about 40 meters directly above the group. It was gray in color and it passed by so rapidly that they did not have time to take a photograph of it. Its body was shape like a duck, but it was at least five times bigger. It had a long neck and the strangest thing about it was that if it would have been compared to an ordinary bird, this one had a much larger body in relation to its wings. Nevertheless, it seemed to fly like an ordinary bird; it glided smoothly and it flapped its wings every so often to gain momentum.

Source: Dr. Virgilio Sanchez Ocejo, Miami UFO Center



Near Puerto Cuatro Chile - July 13, 2000 - 1:30am

A woman and her friend, a professor had just left the Lions Club dinner and was driving south of the city when they spotted "two strange yellow lights" on the road ahead. The driver flashed her high beams at the two intense yellow lights a short distance away. The witnesses began to slow down since the "yellow light" remained stationary. They then saw a figure standing about three feet away from their front bumper. The figure was described as large, lacking ears, covered with extremely long gray hair, particularly around the neck, with two immense slanted yellow eyes. The driver and the creature exchanged looks for about 10 seconds, after which the car drove along the left lane. The creature followed the vehicle's departure with its head, and was apparently capable of making 180-degree turns. Terrified the witnesses drove away, seeing the yellow light again as it lit up the entire road before disappearing.

Source: UFO Roundup Vol. 5 #31

Calama, Chile - August 2000 - 3:00am

Felipe an employee at a local disco reported that one night there was a loud pounding on the outside door, in the back of the building. Thinking that it was a robbery attempt, he armed himself with a club, opened the door, and was confronted by an upright four-foot tall creature with glowing yellow eyes. The creature breathed out a strong substance, which stunned Felipe, who then saw the being silently glide away. Around the same time other local residents reported seeing metallic bell shaped craft flying over the area.

Source: Dr. Virgilio Sanchez Ocejo

Sierra Gorda, Calama, Chile - October 2000 - 5:00pm

Three men standing at the front gate of the Mina El Tesoro spotted what appeared to be a pair of glowing eyes at about 30 meters away. They noticed 3 forms, one large and two small, about 1 meter in height. They were somewhat simian in appearance and bounded away towards the nearby ridge. The same guards had seen similar creatures back in May.

Source: Ramon Navia, "La Verdad Oculta"

Los Boldos, Chile - December 2000 - 7:30pm

Artidoro Inostroza Seguel was watching television with his wife and son when he briefly stepped out to the porch for a breath of fresh air. He saw about 50 meters away an approaching yellow-reddish light. He then noticed that it was a humanoid figure that was apparently carrying the light. The figure wore a dark divers suit, with a hood. On the chest area it had a white-gray stripe that glowed. The humanoid approached to within 8 meters from the witness, who noticed that it was about 2 meters in height. The guard dog did not show any reaction at all. The witness walked back inside the house. Later his wife saw strange lights from the kitchen window area; Artidoro then fired several warning shots at the lights.

Source: Raul Gajardo Leopold, CEFAA

Butaco Valley, Chile - December 2000 - night

During a period of heavy UFO activity in the area, Maria Concha Rivas and her husband reported seeing a giant humanoid figure, reddish in color and about 10-feet tall standing by a nearby river. Frightened they did not stick around and went back inside the house. They did not see the humanoid depart.

Source: UFO Roundup December 2000

Colonia Lolenco, Chile - December 8, 2000 - 2:50am

Retired civil guard Luis Arturo Bayer Garcia, 52 year of age was riding his motorcycle along an isolated area when he saw standing on the side of the road a tall, thin, figure, almost 2 meters in height. He was not able to see any facial features, only a gray-yellow texture. It seemed to be wearing a two-piece outfit and was totally motionless. The witness accelerated away from the area at high speed.

Source: Raul Gajardo Leopold, CEFAA

Villa Frontera, Chile - February 9 2001 - 9:30am



George Calderon and several friends were at a local camping ground and were preparing a barbecue dinner when they noticed on a nearby field a group of white tunic clad figures, including what appeared to be children, gathering under the moonlight. At this point the air became filled with bell like sounds and a huge luminous red round object descended over the white clad figures, which appeared to be holding their hands and chanting in an unknown language. It seemed to the witness that every time the bell sound was heard the object descended lower over the group. A little frightened the witnesses retired back into their tents and went to sleep. The next day, they checked the area directly below where the object was seen to hover and they found a large circular imprint on the ground and within that, four smaller circles.

Source: La Estrella de Loa

Angol, Chile - March 16, 2001 - night

At the local scenic lookout of Las Pinas, five persons saw three two-meter tall figures of humanoid appearance and with red lights on their hands. The beings were standing behind some vegetation, and appeared to be talking among themselves. They suddenly turned around and disappeared. Around the same time 20 other witnesses saw two huge balls of light roaming over the hills before vanishing from sight.

Source: Filer Files April 24

Santa Barbara, Chile - April 2001 - night

In a farm a man heard his fierce bloodhound barking, stepping out he saw a tall figure approach. The figure appeared to be wearing a hood. The witness attempted to approach the figure but at this point his dog let out a loud yelp and hid. At this point the tall figure also disappeared. He described as about 1.90 meters in height, with a flat yellowish face, robotic in appearance.

Source: Raul Gajardo

Villa Covadonga, Chile - April 8 2001 - 10:00pm

Freddy Villalobos, his cousin Christopher Huanca Valenzuela and a group of friends had just finished a soccer match in a nearby field, when they saw a strange bird. It was about 70 cm in length. It landed on top of a public light pole. The light fixture dimmed as the creature landed on it; it was to a point where it was almost completely out. The witnesses were able to see that it had round reddish yellow eyes. The creature emitted short squeaking sounds. One of the witnesses turned on the truck headlights in order to obtain a better look and the bird reacted immediately, covering its head with its wings, as the light apparently bothered it. It seemed to be floating on top of the light fixture rather than having its feet on top of it. Suddenly, it opened up its wings for a brief moment and they saw its head; they described it as horrible. It resembled the head of an old man with a long nose and a triangular shaped mouth. Scared, the kids began throwing rocks at it. It shortly flew away and disappeared.

Source: Virgilio Sanchez Ocejo, Miami UFO Center

Calama Chile - April 10 2001 - 7:00am

The director of a local school noticed a group of children starting at a nearby tree. All were silent and were not moving a muscle and appeared to be fascinated by something. As he approached the group he noticed a bizarre bird-like creature, about 1.80 meters in height that was flying slowly around the tree at about 4 meters from the ground. This "bird" was totally black in color and somewhat resembled a Great Dane dog with wings. It seemed to move in slow motion, and would briefly hide inside the tree branches and then exit again. The director obtained a flashlight from his office and illuminated the creature that seemed to resent the light. It had large bright white eyes. After a few minutes it seemed to disappear in plain sight.

Source: Jaime Ferrer, Calama UFO Center

Calama, Chile - May 5, 2001 - 11:00am

On the day following his encounter with a bizarre creature, a local farmer saw three strange looking but very well dressed men that showed up as he spoke to a friend who had also seen the creature. They stood some 30 meters away from a group of acquaintances who were busy sharing a side of flame-roasted beef. They approached the farmer and informed him that they were police officers and were going to arrest him. Surprised he asked why, since he had not done anything wrong. They told him he could not discuss what he saw the day before with anybody. He asked the strangers to show some badges but they refused. He described the men as being almost 2 meters tall, very thin and closely resembling one another, especially in their bearing and constitution. They wore sunglasses that concealed their eyes. One of them had eyes that reminded the witness of "Spiderman." They always kept their left hands in their pockets. They surveyed the entire area, and never once did they call out to one another. All three wore a type of glove, which left their ring and smallest fingers exposed, with the rest of the fingers occupying a single space. Their shirt cuffs

covered part of this "pseudo-mitten" over which they wore a thin, shiny metal bracelet. He also described a 'prosthetic" covering the nail of the smallest finger, and a ring placed at the tip of the ring finger. Their Spanish was very strange, sloppy as if they were drunk. They spoke a language among themselves that the farmer was unable to understand, he was sure that it was not English. After they left the witnesses realized that the men had not moved their mouths to speak. The farmer further noticed that the group leader wore a hat "similar to a bullfighter's" which barely covered one of his ears, in which he could see a "V" shaped cut and a darker shade of color. He also recalled the following details: a very sharp vocal tone, short blond hair, broad forehead, high cheekbones, straight nose, thin neck, small mouth (except for the leader, who had thick lips and was wearing a safari-type jacket), a mechanized walk, similar gestures, line eyebrows, black ties and tie clips the same color as the stones on their rings. One of the men engaged in roasting the side of beef remarked: "They approached us at one point and looked us up and down, but said nothing at all. They appeared to walk and spin on the tips of their feet. They gave the impression of weighing less than a normal person." They did not accept any water from the witnesses and threatened the farmer once again. They boarded an ivory-lead colored pickup truck which made no noise whatsoever and vanished after a certain distance.

Source: Jaime Ferrer, Calama UFO Center



Chile: Winged Creature in Angol

Mr. Oscar Solar Valdebenito, married, a sergeant with the Carabineros, was performing his duties as a security guard in the Preventive Custody Center of the city of Angol on Friday, April 28 2000. The facility was under construction at the time.

Mr. Solar was alone and was making his rounds of the construction site’s interior. Once he returned to the guard shack on the southern side, using a passageway located in the back, he noticed the presence of an "animal" standing 1.20 meters tall, average complexion, with a small head in proportion to the rest of its body. The creature sat on top of a metal pole ending in four luminaries, standing some 8 meters tall. The animal landed at the very same time that the watchman turned his attention to the site. Solar was able to see the lights go out and the pole shake as a result of the creature’s descent. The estimated weight of this strange being was some 40 to 50 kilograms (according to the eyewitness). Its head featured two medium-sized ears, sideways and pointing upward, with rounded tips, pricked up like those of a police dog. Two long wings with pointed ends emerged from its shoulders. It never folded its wings, keeping them unfurled "like a vulture under the sun" (eyewitness’s description). He saw no feathers, only a kind of velvety skin, dark grey or black in color. He was unable to make out the face. The wings extended to the creature’s lower body, where he could also see two legs. A pair of stubby arms could also be seen under the head.

The witness was accompanied by four dogs, a beige bitch in the lead. Apparently, the "winged animal" pounced on the dogs, but these took off running and howling in a southward direction, abandoning the construction site. Five or six youths coming down from the north along the train tracks that go beside the site, also took off running when they saw what was going on. The witness explained that he was standing some 30

meters from the pole. He didn't manage to move or turn on his flashlight, such was the degree of fright and surprise inspired by the situation described. He recalls having heard a sharp, loud squawk as the "animal" landed on the pole. Judging by the tone of this squawk, it was reminiscent of a loudspeaker's crackle.

The "animal" eventually landed on the ground after making a flight in a gentle curve. It landed on a conical pile of dirt. After the dogs took off, it flew off with two gentle flaps of its wings, flying over a 3 meter wall, above which five wires are suspended, providing light to another streetlamp on the corner. The creature never came close to touching them. The animal came within 10 meters of the witness's position. Its descent to the ground left prints on the mound of dirt - the witness managed to see "three thin holes" and fenced them off, but they were erased and destroyed on the next day at the order of the construction supervisors.

Personnel from Carabineros (state police) reported to the scene the next day, along with the Servicio de Investigaciones (civil police) who displayed their annoyance with the construction supervisor for having erased the prints, despite having been informed of the situation.

Further details:

The witness confesses that when "the animal" was close to him, flying off with a gentle beat of its wings, he was unable to control a bowel movement, a fact that he has tried to keep confidential on account of the customary jokes that tend to emerge in such cases.

The young men who were walking along the train tracks were never located, although efforts are under way, and Radio Los Confines apparently succeeded in this endeavor. But this rumor has not been confirmed. - *Source: www.iiee.cl - translation: Scott Corrales - IHU*



***BIGFOOT IN CHILE**

For the first time, this latest case alerted us about the possibilities that the Bigfoot might have some kind of connection with Chupacabras phenomenon, given that northern Chile, for the most part, is well known for its Chupacabras sightings. This was something that never would have occurred to us before.

A strange coincidence is that so many elements in both the Islamorada and the Tocopilla cases are almost identical; both creatures were seen leaving and entering the sea. This makes us think that they might hide under the sea, lakes or swamps. Both creatures left footprints the size of a football and other similar traces behind. Nevertheless, they have never been photographed, and in spite of countless efforts, they have never been captured. Furthermore, no one has ever found any remains of these creatures.

There are many reports of ufos entering and leaving the sea, both in Florida and in Chile. During an interview for Teletrece, a national Chilean television network, dated October 21 of 2001, Jorge Martinez, a retired Admiral and former Chilean Chief of Naval Operations, admitted that he personally had witnessed two ufo sightings at sea. During one of them, a nearby ufo caused interference with the navigation systems and the ship's radar. It is widely known that many other naval officers have seen similar objects, which they call "UUOs", (Unidentified Underwater Objects). According to the former Chilean Navy Chief, this phenomenon is real.

A taxi driver, who we call Carlos, and happens to be a friend of Jaime Ferrer, our associate in Calama, Chile, has told us that during a trip to Tocopilla, he and some customers saw several low-flying ufos coming from the sea towards the nearby Atacama Desert, where later, tracks made by some kind of landing gear, as well as Chupacabras tracks were found. The tracks appeared to be coming from the exact spot where the ufo landed.

Coincidently, just like the Chupacabras and ufo tracks in Chile, there have been reports of ufos in the same areas where Bigfoot creatures have been seen. Although we have not been able to establish a possible Bigfoot-UFO connection in the United States, we can look at the cases reported near Mount Rainier, in the State of Washington, where Kenneth Arnold observed nine ufos in 1947 giving popularity to the "flying saucer phenomena". Yet, in the same area, there have been countless Bigfoot or Sasquatch sightings dating back to the XIX century.

On the other hand, in light of the evidence found in Chile, we can now affirm that the Chupacabras is part of the ufo phenomenon. We have not found evidence that it is part of some kind of terrestrial genetic experiment, nor do we believe that it is an ordinary animal. The evidence points out to a ufo related origin; I don't have slightest doubt about it.

All this is creating a new chapter in the investigation of the ufo phenomenon that undoubtedly, many will find difficult to accept. But this is very typical. For example, the abduction phenomenon took more than 20 years before ufologists accepted it as part of the ufo investigative field. Even today, many still doubt that alien abductions take place.

It is not my intention to try to convince anyone that the Bigfoot and the Chupacabras phenomena are the same; instead, like many other strange creatures, these may have a possible relation with ufos. It is not a coincidence that we receive reports mentioning a Bigfoot creature in Tocopilla, Chile, followed by numerous Chupacabras and ufo sightings, in what we could call the Chilean 2000-2001 wave.

We are facing a presence of intelligent or programmed creatures that have appeared sporadically and have been associated with other phenomena for more than a century, to whom erroneously, we have given them different names. To finally understand what is really behind all of these creatures, we have to study their characteristics, their behavior, and most importantly, the other associated phenomena that are often reported when these cases take place. We should know and learn about these phenomena, not only for their physical aspect of these creatures, but for their intentions, and most importantly, for their actions and their reactions.

We are buried in some kind of game where our intelligence faces another intelligence, which happens to be strange or, to say the least, different than ours, where the apparently incompatible logic doesn't seem to work, let alone our intuition. Accumulating data from field investigations is all we can do at this point in time. But, will we finally ever know the essence of these phenomena?

We still don't hold the truth in our hands, but we are looking for it. - *www.rense.com*

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Philippines Duterte: God told me to stop swearing - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC



Mr Duterte was on a flight home after a visit to Japan

Image copyright AFP

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte says he has promised God he will clean up his famously vulgar language.

Arriving in his home city of Davao after a trip to Japan, Mr Duterte said God gave him an ultimatum on the plane.

"I heard a voice telling me to stop swearing or the plane will crash in mid-air, and so I promised to stop," he told reporters at the airport.

Mr Duterte's blunt speaking, often directed at the West, has contributed to his popularity at home.

He called President Barack Obama a "son of a whore", called the European Union "hypocritical", threatened to leave the UN and accepted comparisons to Hitler, saying he would gladly kill three million drug addicts.

All were responses to criticisms of his bloody war on drugs, that has seen thousands of alleged drug dealers and users killed by police and vigilante groups.

Mr Duterte said he had promised God he would not "express slang, cuss words and everything", and said a "promise to God is a promise to the Filipino people".

But he suggested his promise might have its limits. Whether he will stick to not swearing when talking about the US, EU or arch political foe Senator Leila de Lima, will depend on timing, local media quoted him as saying.

Like most Filipinos, Mr Duterte is Roman Catholic, although he has boasted about his womanising and called the Pope a "son of a whore" for causing traffic jams during his visit.

The president has spoken about being abused by an American priest as a child, saying that informed his political views.

He recently said that the Philippines wanted "a separation" from long-standing ally the US, and wanted American troops to leave the country, possibly within two years.

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Canvas ripped from wing of plane downed by Red Baron is up for auction

08:12 EDT, 2 November 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Piece of canvas ripped from the wing of a British WWI plane downed by the notorious German ace the Red Baron is set to sell for £3,000

- **Manfred von Richthofen shot down Royal Flying Corps aircraft in 1917**
- **Pilot Keith Ingleby Mackenzie, 18, was Red Baron's youngest war victim**
- **Red Baron ordered soldiers to recover plane's tailplane as a memento**
- **But Commonwealth forces retook ground & John Haydon took souvenir**

By Mark Duell for MailOnline



Red Baron: Manfred von Richthofen is seen as the best fighter pilot of the First World War with a staggering 80 kills to his name

A piece of canvas ripped from a First World War plane that was downed by notorious German ace the Red Baron will go up for auction for £3,000 tomorrow.

Captain John Haydon watched from the trenches as Manfred von Richthofen's bright red plane shot down the Royal Flying Corps aircraft in April 1917 over Vimy Ridge near Lens in France.

Aged 18, pilot Keith Ingleby Mackenzie was the youngest victim of the Red Baron in the Great War, and his observer Guy Everingham, 22, was also killed.

At the time the biplane came down over German lines and the Red Baron ordered soldiers to recover the aircraft's tailplane as a macabre memento of his success.

But the next day the Commonwealth forces retook the ground and Captain Haydon dashed across to the wreckage to take his own souvenir relating to the Red Baron.

He used his knife to cut a 15in by 15in scrap of material from the wing of the BE2.

Canvas: Captain John Haydon dashed to the wreckage to take his own souvenir relating to the Red Baron and used his knife to cut a 15in by 15in scrap of material from the wing of the BE2

Victims: Aged 18, pilot Keith Ingleby Mackenzie (left) was the youngest victim of the Red Baron in the Great War, and his observer Guy Everingham (right), 22, was also killed

He wrote on the canvas: ‘Part of wing of British plane brought down at Vimy Ridge, April 1917, by Baron von Richthofen, the “Red Ace”.’

The relic has passed down through Captain Haydon's family to his grandson Robert, who found it





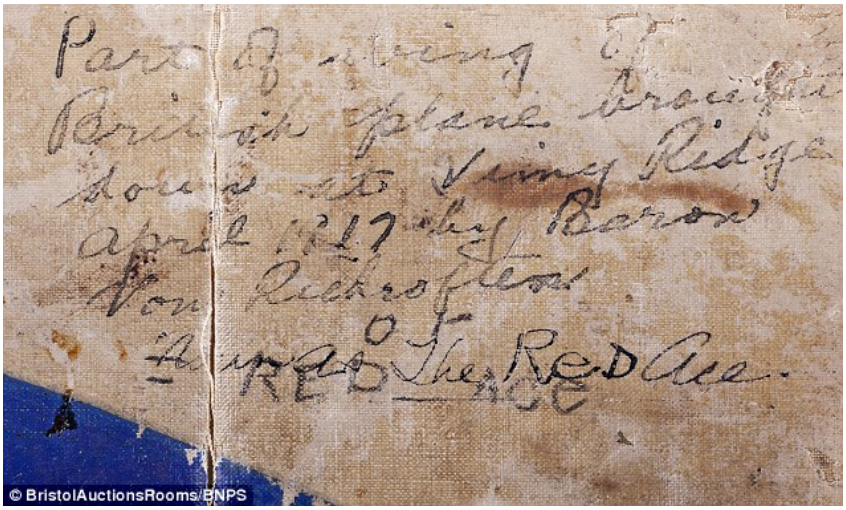


among his late mother's possessions.

The canvas patch - which is being sold at Bristol Auctions Rooms with an estimate of £3,000 - has been described as 'a very unique item and difficult to put a value on'.

Auctioneer Malcolm Claridge said: ‘The value is very much about the personality of von Richthofen rather than the item.

‘It has been in the same family ever since that fateful day and this is the first time it has been seen in public.’



A piece of history: Captain Haydon wrote on the canvas: ‘Part of wing of British plane brought down at Vimy Ridge, April 1917, by Baron von Richthofen, the “Red Ace”'

The Red Baron is regarded as the best fighter pilot of the First World War with a staggering 80 kills to his name.

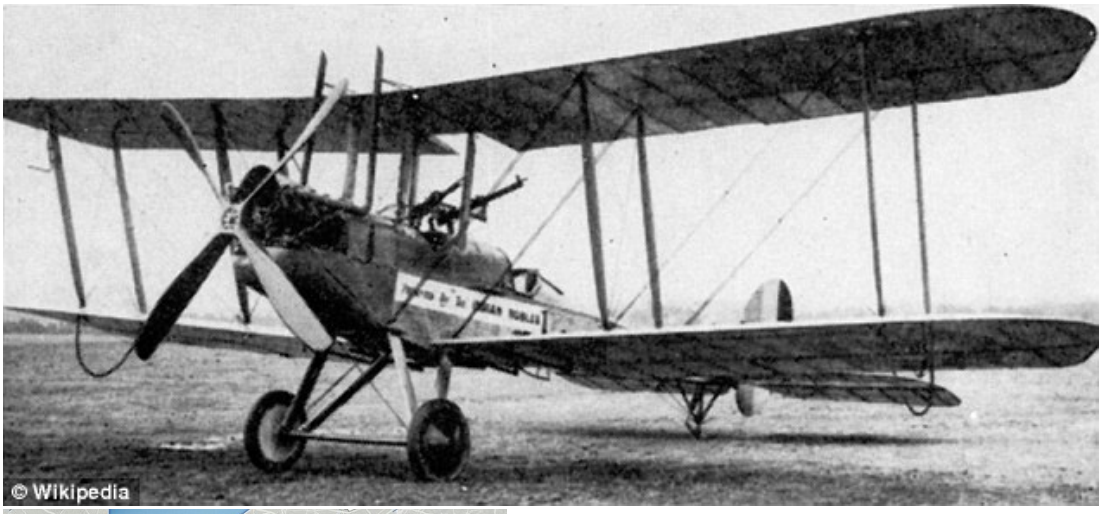
Second Lieutenant Mackenzie's BE2 was his 39th 'victory' and one of 22 British planes he downed in April 1917 alone.

Von Richthofen wrote in his log: ‘April 8, 1917. 16.40 hrs. Vimy. BE2 No. A2815. Occupants: Both killed. Remnants distributed over a kilometre.

‘I was flying and surprised an English artillery flyer. After a very few shots the plane broke to pieces and fell near Vimy, on this side of the lines.’

Captain Haydon, of the Royal Highlanders of Canada, went on to win the Military Cross for gallantry in 1918 and survived the war.

Aircraft: A file picture of a BE2 biplane, similar to the one shot down by the Red Baron



The Red Baron's luck ran out a year after the exchange over Vimy Ridge and he was killed in April 1918.

As he chased a British Sopwith Camel plane over the River Somme near Amiens in France at just 400ft he was hit by a single bullet fired from the ground.



He managed to crash land his plane before dying from his injuries.

Vimy Ridge hosted a famous battle on April 9, 1917, which is seen as a proud moment in Canadian history having been fought primarily by their men, who were victorious over the Germans despite more than 3,500 of their soldiers being killed.

THE RED BARON: PRUSSIAN ARISTOCRAT WHO TRANSFERRED FROM THE CAVALRY TO SEEK GLORY IN THE SKIES



He may have been known as the Red Baron, but Manfred von Richthofen was a 'Free Lord'

BY JAMES DUNN

He may have been known as the Red Baron, but Manfred von Richthofen was actually a 'Free Lord', born into a Prussian aristocratic family in 1892.

He grew up in Schweidnitz, Poland, where he excelled in gymnastics and he and his brother would hunt wild animals as children.

Von Richthofen first joined the war effort as a cavalryman, seeking glory in the traditional way - charging into action on horseback.

But on arrival to the western front, the reality of trench warfare made it impossible and he instead faced the prospect of being a runner and operating telephones.

Unable to participate in combat directly, he requested a transfer to the Imperial German Army Air Service, later to be known as the Luftstreitkräfte.

He wrote in his request: 'I have not gone to war in order to collect cheese and eggs, but for another purpose.'



Von Richthofen took command of German squadron Jasta 11 (pictured in 1917), which had huge success, peaking in the 'Bloody April' of 1917, when they downed 22 British aircraft

It was granted and he joined in May 1915, flying as an observer on reconnaissance missions, where he is believed to have shot a French plane down with his machine gun - but was not credited with the kill because it fell behind enemy lines.

He began training as a pilot in October 1915, and despite a poor start, met German ace Oswald Boelcke and joined his squadron - one of the first fighter squadrons - in August 1916.



Von Richthofen claimed many victories as a great marksman and tactician

Despite not being a spectacular or flamboyant pilot, he claimed many victories as a great marksman and tactician, often diving on his enemies from above.

On November 23, 1916, von Richthofen downed his most famous adversary, British ace Major Lanoe Hawker VC, described by von Richthofen himself as 'the British Boelcke'.

The victory came while von Richthofen was flying an Albatros DII and Hawker was flying the older D.H.2. After a long dogfight, Hawker was shot in the back of the head as he attempted to escape back to his own lines.

He had his Albatros plane painted red - thus his nickname - and took command of an elite German squadron Jasta 11, which had unparalleled success, peaking in the 'Bloody April' of 1917, when they downed 22 British aircraft.

The Red Baron eventually became so well-known that the Germans tried to ground him for fear that his death would be a propaganda disaster - but her refused.

In 1918 he died while pursuing a Canadian Camel plane at low altitude but was spotted by another - flown by a school friend of the pilot he was pursuing.

Captain Arthur 'Roy' Brown dived from above and shot at the German plane, which turned away and managed to land. The RAF credited Brown with the kill although it was later understood that the bullet came from the ground, being controlled by Australian forces.

Comments (

Decius, Dartmouth, Canada, about 6 hours ago

nowadays the bloomin' army likely would charge the British officer with damaging government property; and advancing without authorization as this may upset the enemy.

John, Wiltshire, United Kingdom, about 10 hours ago

I've got some old canvass somewhere along with several pairs of Eva Braun's knickers, embroidered EB and lumps of concrete from the Berlin wall ....or at l,east from a wall in Berlin.

n1iok, The rectum of the universe., United States, about 12 hours ago

Its amazing what people will pay good money for.

Fed Up, Plymouth, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

No sense of history then?

Al from Bromsgrove, Bromsgrove, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

Notorious is not the right word to describe the Red Baron. Like fighter pilots on all sides, he was a brave man serving his country.

Dontknowenough, Essex, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

Agreed. Was probably a good flyer and shooter, and perhaps was often flying in a plane that was superior to his opponents'. I read somewhere that a rotten pilot who was a good shot was more useful than someone with the opposite skills.

Ewan Whoosarmi, Camelot, United Kingdom, about 13 hours ago

We have really let that generation,and the generation that followed, down haven't we?

Winston Smith, Old England, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

The politicians have.

Ewan Whoosarmi, Camelot, United Kingdom, about 13 hours ago

I bet the Calais migrants being shipped into the U.K. would love to hear this story. All that sacrifice over 2 world wars for what?

Ewan Whoosarmi, Camelot, United Kingdom, about 13 hours ago

I guess the 2 boys who died would look in disbelief at the country they died for and wonder whether it was worth it.

Ewan Whoosarmi, Camelot, United Kingdom, about 13 hours ago

The sacrifice and bravery of our forefathers should be taught to every child in the country. Boys of 18 fighting and dying for the country after volunteering to do so yet we can't be seen to take pride or glorify these boys who gave their lives for us all for fear of offending someone. We live in a strange, selfish and fearful time. Afraid to show pride in being British.

Brendamellison, Bradford on Avon, Algeria, about 14 hours ago

This is an important historical artefact! Why isn't the owner giving it to the Imperial War Museum or Hendon?

Dorsyb, Swindon, about 15 hours ago

Nah! He has a look of judge rinder

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Why we say 'pinch punch' and 'white rabbits' on the first day of the month

16:42, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 17:18, 1 Nov 2016 By Nicola Oakley

mirror.co.uk



Getty

Rabbits come up in conversation every month

If you grew up in a superstitious household, you'll probably be familiar with certain expressions.

On the first of every month, you might have heard the phrases 'pinch punch' and 'white rabbits' being thrown about because they supposedly bring good luck.

#PinchPunch has even been trending on Twitter today.

With these sayings come various rumours about when and why you're meant to say them.

Why do we pinch people to celebrate a new page in our calendar? And can you only say "white rabbits" in months which contain the letter R?

There are several explanations as to why we say this every month. Have a read of the theories below, according to Wales Online , and pick your favourite.

Witches

"Originating from old England times when people thought that witches existed.

"People thought that salt would make a witch weak, so the pinch part is pinching of the salt, and the punch part was to banish the witch.



Getty Images

Is this where it comes from?

"The witch would be weak from the salt so the punch was to banish her."

Presidential ritual

"As president, George Washington met local Indian tribes on the first day of each month, when he would supply fruit punch with an added pinch of salt.

"It became known as 'pinch and punch on the first of the month'."

So where do the white rabbits come in?

White rabbits, white rabbits' was recorded as far back as 1909 in the 'Notes and Queries' book from 1909.

The quote reads: "My two daughters are in the habit of saying 'Rabbits!' on the first day of each month.

"The word must be spoken aloud, and be the first word said in the month. It brings luck for that month. Other children, I find, use the same formula."

When do you say it?

According to playground rules, your pinch and punch has to be followed immediately with the words, "White rabbits, no return". By saying so, it means you can't be pinched back.

There are claims it was widely used among RAF bomber aircrew during WWII, who would say "white rabbits" after waking up to protect themselves.

The truth is, nobody actually knows for sure where they came from - but these are pretty good theories to go on.
DailyMirror

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Traffic stop leads to discovery of 20 pigs in back of SUV

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Nov. 3, 2016 at 3:37 PM



A driver opens the rear of his SUV to reveal 20 porcine passengers during a traffic stop. Screenshot: Newsflare

GANZHOU, China, Nov. 3 (UPI) -- A traffic stop in China led to an unusual discovery -- 20 pigs crammed into the cargo section of the driver's SUV.

Body camera footage from the Sunday traffic stop shows the SUV pulled over to the side of the road in Ganzhou, Jiangxi Province.

The vehicle's two human occupants open the rear hatch of the SUV to show the officers its contents: 20 small pigs riding calmly.

It was unclear whether the driver was issued a citation.

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Police hunt woman pictured ‘having sex with dinosaur’ at children’s park

metro.co.uk

Rob Waugh for Metro.co.ukWednesday 28 Sep 2016 3:50 pm



Police hunt woman pictured ‘having sex with dinosaur’ at children’s park

It’s one of those crimes which is going to be very difficult to explain to future employers – after a woman was pictured having sex with a dinosaur.

The picture of the sexual act – on a headless, baby T-Rex, just to make things worse – circulated on social media after the grim event on the Exmouth Dino Trail.

One parent said, ‘I worry as children play with these dinosaurs, I was disgusted. I feel sick to think that children are anywhere near that.’

The organiser of the Exmouth Dino Trail, John Thorogood, told the Exeter Express said, ‘I saw the image on social media and was completely disgusted by it.

‘It was clearly a deliberately posed photograph of a very immature adult engaged in a sex act.

‘Whilst we have had some deliberate damage to the dinosaurs in past weeks, this episode brings things to an all time low as far as these important and very popular assets to our town are concerned.

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Police investigating two swastikas painted on South Philly building

By Daniel Craig and Thom Carroll

phillyvoice.com



November 09, 2016

Police investigating two swastikas painted on South Philly building

Philadelphia police have responded to a South Philly property where two swastikas were spray-painted on the empty building's windows sometime Wednesday morning.

The symbols were scrawled in black paint on the former Meglio Furs building at 1300 S. Broad St. In one instance, the swastika appears to replace the letter T in the word "Trump." In the second, it was accompanied by the German phrase "Sieg Heil 2016."



Public Affairs Officer Christine O'Brien said detectives responded to the location after receiving a call about the symbols and accompanying German writing. "Sieg Heil" translated means "Hail Victory" and was a common chant at political rallies in Nazi Germany during the 1930s.

Cosmo Baker, a DJ and South Philadelphia resident, said he saw a friend post about the swastikas on Facebook Wednesday morning before he went out to see them.

Baker assumed the role of primary complainant to police, calling the graffiti a hate crime.

"I think the messaging was very clear," Baker said. "(Whether) it was malicious intent or stupid kids who wanted to be provocative, it still has the same effect."



Baker said he contacted the Anti-Defamation League. He added that friends and family had contacted similar organizations about the swastikas.

Mayor Jim Kenney said in a statement that the acts should be "condemned in the strongest possible terms."

“As I said in my statement to residents today, in the wake of the election, Philadelphians must work tirelessly to bridge the divides that have plagued this nation for decades," he said. "I know that many residents are planning to take part in vigils and

Thom Carroll/PhillyVoice The Meglio Furs building at 1300 S. Broad St.

rallies tonight and in the days ahead, and I urge you to gather respectfully and peacefully."

The Philadelphia Anti-Defamation League also decried the graffiti. Nancy Baron-Baer, regional director, for the league said she was "horrified" by the messages.

“While we view this as an isolated incident, we cannot allow this behavior to become routine," she said in a statement. "Everyone has a role to play in combating bigotry – we must advocate, educate and investigate until hate is no longer welcome in our society."

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Police mistakenly bust out car windows thinking child was stuck inside

newsnet5.com

Traffic Weather All Sections
Justin Boggs
10:48 AM, Oct 23, 2016



While a woman spent part of the workday at a shopping center purchasing supplies, Suffolk, Virginia police notified Jasmine Turner on Thursday that there was a child locked in Turner's car on a hot afternoon.

This stemmed from a 911 call from a concerned citizen who believed there was a child stuck in Turner's backseat. Temperatures in Suffolk reached the mid 80s on Thursday, prompting the concern.

According to WAVY-TV, Turner told police that she did not have a child and did not know how a child would have gotten into her car. She said that it would take her about five minutes to return to her car.

Police could not wait that long.

WAVY reported that the police smashed the windows to Turner's car, only to find a wig on top of a pile of blankets.

When Turner returned from the store, the police had left, but the damage was evident. The damage left several hundred dollars in repairs. Repairs that Turner said she does not feel she is responsible for.

“I just want my window fixed and them to pay for it, either being in a rental or whatever the case is. I can’t take off work. I have bills to pay,” Turner told WAVY.

Turner claimed the police told her it could not pay for the damages.

Suffolk Police told WAVY-TV that they notified Turner of the damages, and directed her to the city's risk management division to make a claim.

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No dropping: Law mandating horse poop bags rankles Amish

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 1, 2016

AUBURN, Ky. (AP) — Amish residents of a western Kentucky town are fighting back against an ordinance requiring large animals to wear collection bags to catch their droppings, arguing that the law unfairly singles out their community.

The Daily News of Bowling Green reports (http://bit.ly/2fpUWWK) that many Amish in Auburn have refused to comply with the ordinance, citing concerns that attempts to put the bags on their horses might frighten the animals. Many cases have landed in court, and some defendants have been jailed for refusing to pay the fine for violating the ordinance.

Last week, attorney Travis Lock filed a notice arguing that the regulation is unconstitutional because it discriminates against the Amish.

"It's being clearly designed to single out the Amish and, frankly, to discriminate against the Amish," Lock said. "This ordinance was passed to target this particular group of Amish in the Auburn community and that in and of itself is unconstitutional and discriminatory."

Auburn officials say the ordinance keeps the streets clean and reduces the risk of spreading disease.

Logan District Judge Kenneth Williams set a hearing on April 26 in district court to hear oral arguments on the challenge to the ordinance.

"Hopefully we can get some sort of resolution shortly after the April date, but realistically there's always other potential appeals after that," said Logan County Attorney Joe Ross, who has been prosecuting the cases.

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Information from: Daily News, http://www.bgdailynews.com

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Feds: Pooper scooper pretended to be Secret Service agent

yahoo.com

AP October 27, 2016

JOE MAN

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A man whose company scoops up pet poop has been charged with flashing a fake Secret Service ID and badge during a traffic stop and using it to get the "government rate" for a hotel room.

Christopher Diiorio, 53, pleaded not guilty Thursday to federal charges of conspiracy, using a false badge and a fraudulent official seal.

Reserve Township police said Diiorio flashed the ID card after an officer pulled him over for a faulty brake light July 22. The hotel incident occurred a month earlier.

Diiorio and his attorney, William Difenderfer, didn't respond to calls or emails. Messages left at Doodle Scoopers, Diiorio's Bethel Park business, also were not returned.

A federal indictment alleges Diiorio emailed his photograph and information to "a foreign producer of false identification documents" between March 2014 and June 18, the date he is accused of using the badge at a hotel.

The foreign entity — which was not identified by name or country — then shipped fake Secret Service identification cards to Diiorio, the indictment said.

He originally faced state charges of forgery and impersonating a public servant stemming from the traffic stop, but those were dropped when federal authorities took over the case.

According to the police complaint, the officer who stopped Diiorio took pictures of both sides of the identification card, which included a hologram, and sent them to a Secret Service agent related to the officer. The agent advised police the ID was fake, and the Secret Service was assigned to investigate.

The most serious charge, conspiracy to commit an offense against the U.S., carries a sentence of up to 15 years in prison.

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Pooping woman with purloined pickup in pile of trouble

Off the Beat Will Greenlee , will.greenlee@tcpalm.com

tcpalm.com

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Pooping woman with purloined pickup in pile of trouble

PORT ST. LUCIE — A woman spotted pooping in front of a pickup truck outside Wendy's wound up in a pile of trouble.

That's because the pickup truck where Robin Mckenzie, 58, was moving her bowels was stolen, according to a Port St. Lucie police report.



Robin Mckenzie

(Photo: PROVIDED BY PORT ST. LUCIE POLICE)

The case that ended with Mckenzie's arrest began about 11:27 p.m. on Nov. 1 when an officer "observed a woman defecating in front of her vehicle" outside a Wendy's.

The woman, later identified as Mckenzie, said Wendy's was closed and she couldn't get in to use the toilet.

As Mckenzie left, the officer checked the license plate on the pickup and determined it was stolen out of Fort Lauderdale. The officer stopped the vehicle.

Mckenzie's mom owns the truck, and police called her. She told police a family member was working on it in her driveway and that Mckenzie hopped in and drove off.

Pickup from case

Mckenzie told police her brother took her Mercedes-Benz to repair and lent her the truck so she could see her daughter in Louisiana.

It's unclear whether Mckenzie's brother lent her any toilet paper.



(Photo: PROVIDED BY PORT ST. LUCIE POLICE)

"She (Mckenzie) shouted that he must be trying to take her Mercedes and the truck and he must have lied that the truck was stolen," a report states.

Mckenzie, of Fort Lauderdale, was arrested on a felony grand theft charge and logged in to jail in what could be called a stinker of a case.

She appeared to have been on a roll with respect to pooping because police reported she defecated in the back of the patrol car.

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Woman claims 'possessed' salad dressing caused £2,000 worth of damage to home

13:51, 11 Nov 2016 Updated 14:24, 11 Nov 2016 By Joshua Barrie

mirror.co.uk



Woman claims 'possessed' salad dressing damaged her home

A woman claims to have been "attacked" by her salad dressing.

Divel McLean was hoping to rustle up some dinner when the bottle, which she says was "possessed", exploded.

“I heard pop, pop, pop. I looked up, it was possessed. It was going crazy. It was shooting up in the air, to the side," McLean told *Fox19.*

“It sounded like a firecracker going off in the house. Real loud."

McLean, from Wyoming in the US, said that the Dorothy Lynch-brand salad dressing attacked her when she opened the fridge.



YouTube / KTWO

"Well it's hard to explain, I was attacked by a bottle of salad dressing," McLean told the local TV station.

"Probably thought I was on the whiskey or something."

McLean added that she snapped photographs of the scene of devastation afterwards. Reports suggest that the property's carpet, computer, walls, and dress were damaged in the incident.



YouTube / KTWO

The American estimates that

approximately £2,000, or $2,500 of damage was caused to the home.

She later found out that the salad dressing had been recalled by the manufacturer. Apparently bacteria in the product causes the liquid to bubble and spew out uncontrollably.

“From just a $3 bottle of dressing. From the depths of my toes, to the top of my head. I will never eat Dorothy Lynch again. That stuff is crazy," McLean concluded.

DailyMirror
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Post Reportedly Appears On Woman's Twitter Account After Her Dismembered Body Found

foxnews.com

Published September 21, 2016
FoxNews.com

A day after the body of a North Texas college student was found dismembered and burned in a plastic kiddie pool in a park, a mysterious tweet appeared on her Twitter account that read, “Never knew I could feel like this.”

Authorities in Grapevine told KHOU.com they were investigating the tweet as part of wider investigation into the man charged in her death.

Charles Dean Bryant, 30, is being held on $1 million bond on a charge of capital murder in the death of 24-year-old Jacqueline Vandagriff. He was released from jail on a stalking charge just days before meeting Vandagriff at a bar Sept. 13. Her body was found the next morning after firefighters extinguished a fire in a Grapevine park.

According to an arrest warrant, Vandagriff is seen on a security video meeting Bryant at the bar in Denton, where she attended Texas Woman's University. They are later seen going to another bar, then leaving together at about 9:45 p.m.

Grapevine police Sgt. Robert Eberling has said that it's not known if the two knew each other before meeting at the bar. KHOU.com reported that Bryant posted on Facebook the day after her body was found: “Full moon, let’s see what trouble I can get into.”

Cellphone data indicate that early on the morning of Sept. 14, Vandagriff's phone was in the vicinity of Bryant's home in Haslet, about 25 miles southwest of Denton, according to the arrest warrant. Video evidence showed Bryant buying a shovel at 4:41 a.m. at a Walmart, and there was evidence at his home that someone had tried to dig a hole in the ground.

Officials responding to a fire about 6:30 a.m. found Vandagriff's body in a plastic kiddie pool in a park in Grapevine, located about 20 miles from Haslet. The arrest warrant says a witness saw a man standing over the fire before leaving.

Jail records show Bryant was arrested Sept. 7 by University of North Texas police on a stalking charge and posted bond at the Denton County jail on Sept. 9. He was also arrested by UNT police Sept. 6 and released the same day on bond for criminal trespass.

According to Denton County court records, the stalking and criminal trespass arrests came after Bryant continued to contact his former girlfriend, despite her desire that he not after she ended their dating relationship Aug. 23. Upon Bryant's stalking arrest, a judge issued the emergency protective order.

Court records show that on Saturday -- three days after Vandagriff's body was found -- his ex-girlfriend told police she'd received emails from Bryant saying he missed her and wanted to talk to her.

Police on Sunday arrested him, and he was later charged with capital murder. It was not immediately clear if he had an attorney.

Texas Woman's University said Vandagriff was a nutrition student there. Eberling said Bryant had worked at the Urban Cowboy Saloon in Fort Worth. The gay dance club said on its Facebook page that he was fired on Sunday for not showing up for his shift.

According to the arrest warrant, officials executing a search warrant at Bryant's home found Vandagriff's purse in the trash. The document also said the search found a kiddie pool in the backyard that looked similar to the one found with Vandagriff's burning body in it, and saw a patch of dead grass where it appeared a similar pool had been. Bryant's roommate told police that there had recently been two kiddie pools in the backyard.

Vandagriff's cause of death has not yet been released.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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Prince of Tricksters by Matt Houlbrook review – the remarkable lives of the 'aristocrat of crooks'

PD Smith
Saturday 12 November 2016

theguardian.com

The extraordinary story of Netley Lucas – a con artist and chameleon, a literary hoaxer and a mirror for a changing society



Two-faced … Netley Lucas – AKA Evelyn Graham, Aka Albert Marriott, AKA Gerald Chilfont. Photograph: The British Library

In 1917, Netley Lucas was 14 and working as a pantryman on the passenger liner Kenilworth Castle, travelling between London and Cape Town. He was an orphan. His mother had died just after his birth, and he had been abandoned by his alcoholic father. Wealthy grandparents had sent him to public school, but when they died, Lucas was alone in the world.

On the Kenilworth Castle, Lucas read a newspaper report about someone who had posed as an officer. Intrigued by this idea, he got to know a South African midshipman named Gerald Chilfont, who was home after being wounded in the first world war, and then, back in London, Lucas did something that would change the course of his life: he bought a midshipman's uniform and became Gerald Chilfont. With his new uniform and false identity, he went to King George and Queen Mary's Club in Westminster, a philanthropic institution providing accommodation for soldiers. There he met an aristocratic woman doing her bit for the war effort and she introduced him to "a glittering social round". As he said, gaining people's trust was easy with "sufficient nerve to bluff things out and a tongue sufficiently glib to tell a convincing story".

Lucas was a born confidence trickster. The dashing, smooth-talking young man looked older than his actual age and was overwhelmed with "invitations from perfect strangers to dinners, theatres, lunches and weekend parties". People were keen to lend him money after he told them that he had lost his kit at the Battle of Jutland, and his uniform was a ticket to credit accounts at restaurants, tailors and car hire companies.

> By 17, Lucas had a chauffeur-driven Daimler from Harrods and was socialising with duchesses and chorus girls

But his glamorous life as Gerald Chilfont didn't last long. He was soon arrested for obtaining money by false pretences and, as a juvenile, sent to a reformatory. Almost immediately he escaped and again began posing as a gentleman. With what he called "the drawling accent of the spoilt son of an aristocrat", he exploited the gullibility of a society that trusted upper-class manners and expensive clothing. Later, a friend would recall how convincing Lucas was: "He would look you straight in the face and assure you that he was Lord somebody or a hero of the war – and you believed him." Lucas monetised his genteel manners and appearance. He sweet-talked hotel managers and shopkeepers, turning charm and the comportment of a gentleman into credit. By 17, he had a chauffeur-driven Daimler from Harrods and was socialising with duchesses and chorus girls.

Between 1917 and 1924, Lucas was taken to court five times. In a society of strangers, his crimes were subversive, suggesting all you needed was money and the veneer of class to pass yourself off

as a gentleman. For historian Matt Houlbrook, Lucas's life story reveals deeper truths about the period after the first world war. He cites the criminologist Henry Rhodes: "Show me your crimes and I will show you the nature of your society." New forms of mass culture and democracy promised greater possibilities of personal reinvention: "Lucas's crimes were unusual, but his aspirations echoed those of countless ordinary men and women in a period when advertising encouraged dreamlike fantasies of social mobility."

Lucas had an astonishing run as a confidence trickster. After 1924, the self-fashioned "aristocrat of crooks" claimed to be a reformed character and turned to writing. He boasted: "Journalism is the only honest profession for which a criminal life is a good training." Having made a name for himself writing for newspapers, he wrote six books in three years, beginning with *The Autobiography of a Crook* (1924), which became a bestseller.

But in summer 1927 his new career was cut short when it was discovered that he had fabricated stories: "The confessing ex-crook was a facade, a cynical pose to deceive publishers and readers, a crime of confidence." Later it emerged that even his autobiography was a "curious literary hoax", ghosted by a writer who had been paid to write a novel based on some events in Lucas's life. But Lucas's chameleon-like powers of reinvention were far from exhausted. He was determined to, as he put it, "take the literary world of London by storm". And that's precisely what he did next.

Evelyn Graham's "bogus biography factory" was described by the press at the time as "the most impudent literary scandal of the century". In three years, Graham had published more than a dozen biographies of British and European royalty, beginning in 1929 with Princess Mary. The New York Times described him as "biographer-in-chief to the courts of Europe".

> He was determined, as he put it, to 'take the literary world of London by storm'. And that's precisely what he did

Graham worked with the newly established publisher and literary agent Albert E Marriott, who boasted that he wanted to "break all the accepted rules of the game". But Marriott and Graham fell foul of royal officials for pretending that their biographies were authorised. When Marriott published *The Biography of HM Queen Mary* in 1930, supposedly by Charlotte Cavendish, the widow of a colonel in the Indian Army, royal officials were outraged. Queen Mary herself went through a copy marking up errors: "I have annotated this book to show what a number of inventions are written about one." Journalists tried and failed to track down the author. They then turned their attentions to Graham, who by 1930 was a rich man, earning £500 a month.

In a series of articles on "the mystery of Evelyn Graham" it was revealed that the author was none other than Netley Lucas. The deception didn't end there. Marriott, too, was another of his personas. In total, journalists uncovered eight authors' names associated with Lucas. Described as "a literary shark of the most unscrupulous kind", he was arrested in 1931 after trying to sell another bogus manuscript.

After 15 months in Wormwood Scrubs, Lucas emerged "gaunt and haggard". But he could still turn a trick – and write a book, this time another autobiography, appropriately titled *My Selves* (1933). He claimed that for the first time in his life he was being "perfectly honest with myself and the world". But no one believed the man who had assumed some 40 identities in the course of his life.

Lucas drank himself into an early grave in 1940. Few mourned the passing of the man known as the "prince of tricksters". Even Houlbrook acknowledges that Lucas was a "lying bastard". But he can't

help but be beguiled by this extraordinary character: “I’m obsessed with making sense of you.” Lucas is an exquisitely slippery subject and Houlbrook admits that “my writing echoes the uncertainties of Lucas’s lives”. But this is far more than a biography. It is a portrait of a period in transition which Houlbrook describes as an “age of disguise”. His book is theoretically aware, meticulously researched and brimming with insights into both the interwar years and this unscrupulous yet remarkable figure for whom identity was as fluid and fleeting as quicksilver.

comments

- girlwithhandbag

12h ago

What a remarkable tale! This books sounds excellent and you can't help but have a bit of time for someone who just thought: 'I'll blag it'. A bit different of course, but it reminded me a little of the Percy Toplis story, which has always fascinated me as well.

- whiteyed

21h ago

Genius,

- stvkiley

24h ago

Sounds like a good read. Someone who was orphaned, even though getting some help on the way. If he managed to fool a lot of high born idiots, then I can only admire him. I think it might give a good picture of the time after WW1, from reading the review.

- zuftawov943

1d ago

Ah, the recurrent thrils of such a life, ever stimulated by the prospect of greater success and the prospect of exposure. The fast lane indeed - and a lane that such a smooth and daring traveller could expand and decorate at will. It surely beats the nine-to-five or the self-stacking in a liner's pantry.

  - zuftawov943zuftawov943

  14h ago

  Corrections:

  ... the recurrent thrills of ...
  ... the shelf-stacking of ...

- Buddhaguy

1d ago

While the observation attributed to Henry Rhodes "Criminologist" is appealing, searching the Internet for information on Rhodes is perhaps revealing. Actually almost nothing is revealed about the person. Until further credentials are revealed it is perhaps best to say "the self-

proclaimed criminologist". On further thought, Rhodes was probably just another of Lucas' persona.

- PadraigSeamusBalling
1d ago

He sounds rather like some current figures.

- ParallelGalaxy
1d ago

Lucas looked genuinely remorseful in his mugshot; not smarmy or cocky like some of those taken today. The duty police sergeant threatening to wrap a truncheon around his head if he smiles, probably helped.

  - Andrew GreenParallelGalaxy
  1d ago

  I'm sure a skilled conman like Lucas would know what expression he should adopt for a police mugshot.

- radical
1d ago

That period between the wars produced some remarkable criminals. The most remarkable, (if that's the right word) was Victor Hervey the Marquess of Bristol leader of the Mayfair Playboys.

  - cerisesradical
  1d ago

  A Conservative crook who amassed a fortune and became a tax exile. A role model.

- Puddicus
1d ago

I don't believe a word of this!

  - NepthsolemPuddicus
  1d ago

  Well then, take it up with "PD Smith".

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Private rooms at Pope's summer residence open to public

yahoo.com

AFP Relax News•October 22, 2016

Private rooms at the pope's summer residence in Castel Gandolfo will open to the public from Saturday at the request of Pope Francis, who has never holidayed there in more than three years as pontiff.

The Argentine has refused the traditional trappings of the papacy from the start, declining to move into the sumptuous papal apartment in the Vatican and plumping instead to live in a hotel inside the tiny city state.

Francis's decision will allow visitors access to the bedroom where more than 15 popes have slept over the centuries, furnished with a gilded bed and two bedside tables in wood and marble.

The bed has also served another purpose -- during the Second World War, when the 55-hectare (135-acre) residence was opened to refugees, some 40 children were born there.

"Here, the grand events of history mix with personal histories," said Osvaldo Gianoli, director of the pontifical villas.

"The opening of the private apartments has a symbolic value which reflects the pastoral beliefs of Pope Francis," Gianoli said during an inauguration ceremony on Friday.

The second-floor apartments still bear the traces of the frequent visits of Francis's predecessor, Benedict XVI -- for example 12 volumes of a German theological lexicon line the shelves of the study.

The German came to this hilltop palace, with its view over lake Albano, after his shock announcement in 2013 that he would become the first pontiff in seven centuries to resign from the role.

Saverio Petrillo -- who spent 56 years in service to seven popes at the residence -- recalled how John XXIII (1958-1963) would slip out without an escort and drive to neighbouring castles, on one occasion almost missing prayers.

Francis opened the estate's gardens to the public in 2014, with tours organised for groups and by reservation only.

Since last year, tourists have also been able to climb aboard a special white train for an express trip to the lavish estate and a tour of the papal villa, including past the pope's organic farm, which includes cows, free-range hens, cockerels and pontifical bees.

Francis's absence from the palace is not exceptional -- of the 33 popes who could have stayed there only around half have done so, according to Antonio Palucci, director of the Vatican museums. His successors will be able to return there if they wish.

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Psychosocial counseling for mass hysteria affected students

myrepublica.com



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September 22, 2016 10:24 AM , Republica

KHOTANG, Sept 22: The girl students at Sharada Secondry School at Hauchur in Khotang district, who were recently taken ill with mass hysteria, have received psychosocial counseling.

The sub-regional office of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in Diktel of Khotang district provided counseling not only to students but to their parents to enable them to tackle the psychological condition.

The outbreak of mass hysteria among the girls towards the last week of June nearly led the school on the verge of closure for it continued to grip them rather than being subdued, according to the Principal Ram Kumar Baruwal.

The teaching learning activities of the school was affected since the problem appeared among some girl students above grade 7. They had fallen unconscious suddenly and started screaming and crying uncontrollably, shared Principal Baruwal. RSS

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Belarus pubs urged to sell cow-blood snacks - BBC News

bbc.com

By News from Elsewhere... ...as found by BBC Monitoring

- 19 September 2016



Image copyrightWikimedia/Sergei Frolov

Hematogen snack bars are often marketed as nutritious snacks for children

A bar owner in the Belarusian capital Minsk was surprised to receive a visit from the local health department asking him to stack iron-rich snacks on his counter - specifically hematogen, which is made with cow blood.

The landlord, Yuri, showed the Onliner website a photo of the official's letter, which noted a "low take-up" in Minsk of goods made by the Ekzon state-run health supplement company. It "recommends that at least three types of hematogen bar, as well as rosehip and rowanberry syrup, should be displayed for sale on the counter".

Sweetened hematogen bars, containing a sterilised cow-blood extract, were popular with children in the Soviet Union, but Yuri isn't sure they'll appeal to modern pub-goers. "Today we suggest you try a vanilla hematogen bar with your beer. Or how about a pina colada made with coconut hematogen? We also have an exclusive range of rosehip syrup cocktails. They must be having a laugh," he complains.

Onliner contacted Minsk's health department, which didn't think it was a laughing matter. "What's wrong? If you stock chocolate bars, why not hematogen," said one official, explaining it's all part of a drive to offer customers healthy alternatives.

This isn't the first time the authorities have urged pubs to stock Ekzon goodies. Back in June, the health department in the western city of Homel sent bar owners a similar letter, and met with the same mockery, Naviny newspaper reported.

Ekzon's director, Pyotr Lukyanavich, told Belapan news agency at the time that he was concerned that the public preferred "lower-quality" Russian hematogen. "When traders say foreign chocolate bars sell better, I'm frankly amazed - where do they think they live?" he asked, adding that he saw nothing wrong with "a little protectionism" to boost his sales.

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You can leave your hat on: Scholar says Puritans were sexy

wtop.com

By The Associated Press October 21, 2016 12:45 am 10/21/2016 12:45am

BOSTON (AP) — “Fifty Shades of Grey,” Puritan edition?

The famously strait-laced 17th-century sectarians who helped settle America weren’t nearly as priggish as you might think, a leading Puritan scholar says.

Letters penned by Puritan forefathers including Colonial Gov. John Winthrop evoke more passion than prudishness, said Francis Bremer, a professor emeritus of history at Pennsylvania’s Millersville University.

Bremer is presenting his latest research next week at Boston’s Old South Meeting House, at an event dubbed “Ravishing Affection: Myths and Realities about Puritans and Sex.”

“The Puritans believed that everything God created was naturally good — including intercourse,” he said. “They weren’t hostile to sexuality. They saw sex and love as important factors to help a man and a woman form a passionate relationship and strengthen it.”

He points to a love letter that Winthrop wrote in 1618 to his wife, Margaret Tyndall, as an example of Puritan passion.

In the letter, Winthrop — one of the founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony — speaks of “being filled with the joy of thy love, and wanting opportunity of more familiar connection with thee, which my heart fervently desires.”

Thomas Hooker, a Puritan who founded what would become Connecticut, was even more explicit.

“The man whose heart is endeared to the woman he loves, he dreams of her in the night, hath her in his eye an apprehension when he awakes, museth on her as he sits at table, walks with her when he travels, and parlies with her in each place where he comes … She lies in his bosom, and his heart trusts in her, which forceth all to confess, that the stream of his affection, like a mighty current, runs with full tide and strength.”

Not that New England’s Puritans were swingers. Scholars agree they clung to decidedly conservative Calvinist beliefs about love and marriage. H.L. Mencken defined Puritanism as “the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.”

Lisa Wade, a sociologist at Occidental College in Los Angeles and an expert on sexual culture and gender, says the Puritans viewed marriage — always monogamous and never same-sex — primarily as a means of producing children.

It wasn’t until two centuries later, at the twilight of the Victorian era, that the notion of romantic love as a key reason to pair off took hold.

Even so, Bremer — who has written 16 books about Puritanism — says letters and sermons suggest the Puritans were eager and attentive lovers.

The Puritans got their name from their desire to “purify” the Church of England, which they thought was corrupt. Yet they openly discussed sexuality and freely expressed passionate longings toward

their spouses, and their sermons likened an intense and affectionate marriage relationship to Christ's love for the church.

"One thing that surprises the heck out of everyone is that people were charged — both in church and civil cases — with NOT engaging in sex with their spouse," Bremer said.

If the average Puritan had posted a relationship status, it surely would be: "It's complicated." But Bremer hopes his research will help dispel enduring myths.

"It becomes very easy to say, 'Oh, well, they didn't like sex at all,'" he said. "The myths lead people to say these are individuals we don't want to know anything more about. But the Puritans have a lot to teach us."

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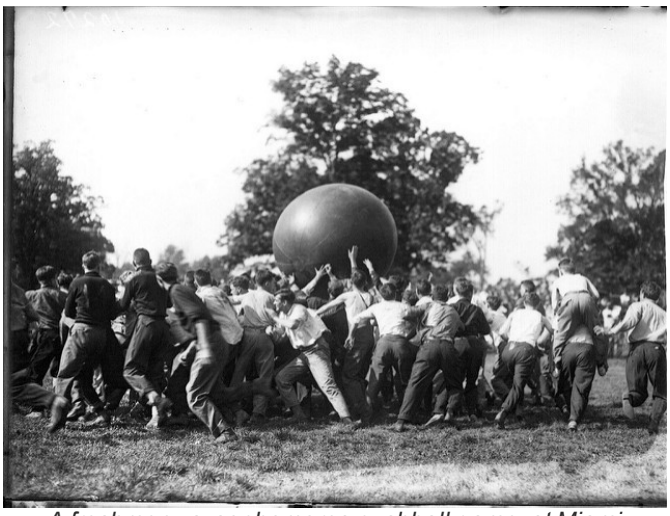
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The Best Sport Of The Early 1900s Involved Pushing Around An Elephant-Sized Ball

atlasobscura.com

Invented by a football-hating electrical engineer, eventually, horses got involved.

by Cara Giaimo
September 26, 2016



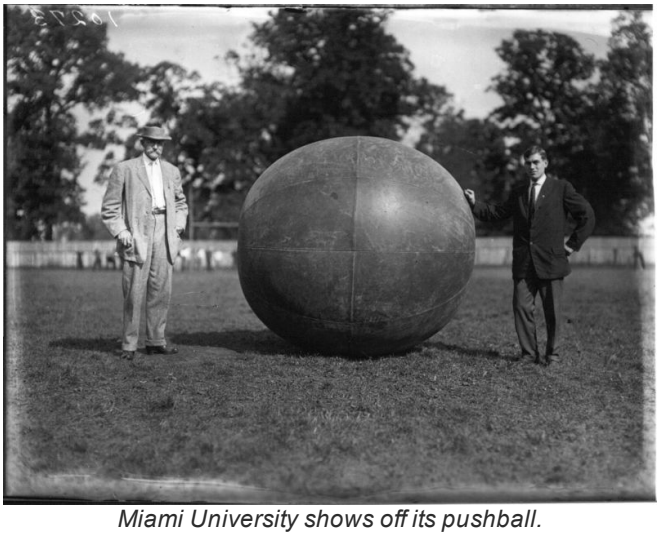
A freshmen vs. sophomores pushball game, at Miami University in 1910.

Imagine you're touring the shed of an early 20th-century sportsman. It's mostly standard stuff—tennis raquets and lacrosse sticks hang from hooks above the doorframe, and baseball bats lean against the walls. But over there, in the corner, something towers over the other equipment. It's a hulking sphere, the size of a small elephant.

It looks like the boulder that chased Indiana Jones.

But this isn't a weapon for squashing bad referees. It's a pushball—the centerpiece of what might be the goofiest forgotten sport in American history. For decades starting in the 1890s, everyone from stockbrokers to college students had thrown themselves at a pushball, struggling mightily with his team to push it over their opponent's goal line.

Pushball was the brainchild of a suburban Massachusetts man named Moses Crane. Crane made his living as an electrical engineer, selling telegraphs and burglar alarms from his Boston storefront. But much of his spare time was spent watching his three strapping Harvard sons play football, a sport he vehemently disliked. He was not the only one who felt this way: "The observer [of football] sees only a mass of struggling bodies piled up in a heap, disentangling themselves at intervals merely to repeat the unavailing onslaught," wrote reporter C. H. Allison in a 1903 article celebrating pushball. "To the average person without a college education or a predilection for sports it is incomprehensible, dull, cruel."



Miami University shows off its pushball.

Crane's fix was simple: make the ball big enough that spectators could definitely, absolutely see it no matter what. After several years of offering this unsolicited advice, his hometown sporting club, the Newton Athletic Association, assured Crane that if he built such a ball, they'd find something to do with it. So in the fall of 1894, Crane constructed the first-ever pushball, out of rubber and leather and on his own dime (for $175, about $4,800 in today's money). Six feet in diameter and weighing in at about 70 pounds, it was certainly unmissable.

Some Newton lads tested the massive ball out in a scrimmage just after Thanksgiving, pushing it around a field for hours and attracting a rather large audience. Local devotees worked out the rules over the

course of the next year, and the sport's official debut came in October of 1885, during the halftime of a Harvard-Brown football match.

"The object of the game is simply to push the ball," explained a somewhat bemused *New York Times* sports reporter. "The game appeared very much a game for strong, active men, but was very amusing to the spectators." A job well done.

Crane, who died in 1898, didn't get to spectate many pushball games, and lacking his guidance, those who tried to introduce the sport outside of Boston ran into some logistical issues. One New York park manager, stuck without a pushball before a planned exhibition game, resorted to making one himself out of hay and shoe leather, and left it out on the playing field over a rainy night. When he let the players loose on it in the morning, the soggy boulder weighed, according to one chronicler, "closer to five hundred pounds." The spectators enjoyed that game, too, but for different reasons.

Despite this and other setbacks, though, the sport eventually got rolling. In January of 1903, *Spalding's Athletic Library*, a popular series of sports manuals, released a pushball edition, complete with illustrations, a brief history, and an official set of rules. Teams were to be made up of five forwards, two left wings, two right wings, and two goalies. The pitch was set at 120 by 50 yards, the same as a football field, with an H-shaped goal on each side.

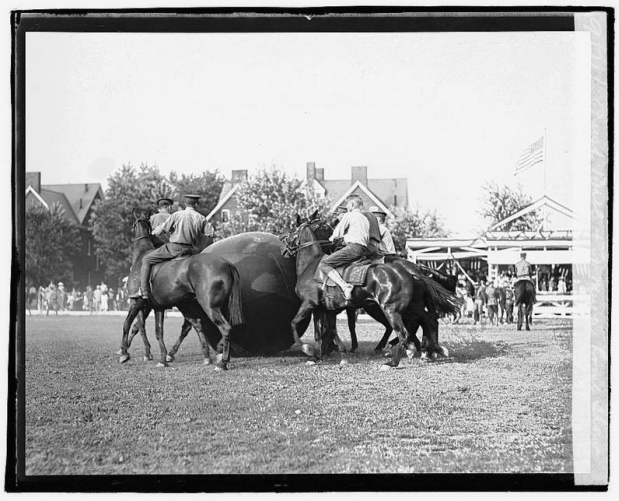
Players scored points by getting the ball past the opposing side's goal line—eight for hefting it over the crossbar, five for rolling it through the posts, and two for muscling it over the line at all, goal notwithstanding. And everything was done with a regulation-sized pushball, weighing between 48 and 50 pounds and produced (of course) by Spalding.



Plenty of people have ideas about how to make sports better, and these days, few go so far as to implement them. But as sports historian John Thorn explains, things were different way back then. "The dawn of pushball [was] part of a 'rage for sport' that hit a prosperous America in the 1880s and spawned novelty contests galore," says Thorn. Baseball was played on roller skates or ice skates, and goofy match-ups pitted every imaginable demographic against each other:one-armed vs. one-legged men, one department store's employees vs. another's, size-based "Jumbos vs. Shadows" matches.

Pushball had the advantage of being silly on its own. "It is an utterly ridiculous sport," says Thorn. "It was jocular from the get-go." Roll the behemoth game ball onto a field or into a room, and some kind of fun was inevitable. It was a favorite on various college campuses, where entire classes would rush the ball from either side. Starting in 1906, it was a huge part of the New York Giants' preseason training regimen, replacing "the old-fashioned system of running and walking." Wall Street brokers would break out a pushball as soon as the floors closed for Christmas. According to the *New York Times*, they labeled the ball "Amalgamated Copper," and "pushed [it] up and down the floor much as the stock itself moves."

Within a few decades of its invention, pushball was established enough that it, too, got the spinoff treatment. In the early 1900s, people started playing it on horses. "The ball is propelled by the horses knees, and an expert rider often makes his animal punt it the whole length of the field," explains a description of a 1904 match, adding that this game was played "to the perturbation of



several cows." According to Thorn, by the 1920s, daredevils were attempting "auto pushball," in which two teams of three cars went after the ball ("in it one gets many a thrill," promised a newspaper ad). Meanwhile, says Thorn, the original sport was repurposed as a training exercise for soldiers who had been blinded in World War I, gaining it a bit of respectability.

But all good things must come to an end. By the middle of the 20th century, pushball had lost some of its momentum, replaced either by slightly more serious sports or even goofier ones. These days, you'd be hard pressed to find a pushball devotee, let alone a pushball. When asked to theorize on why the sport died out, Thorn mentions Sisyphus: "I think the existential pointlessness of the game had to dawn upon its participants," he says. "You push this thing around, and then the time for your game is finished."

You could argue, though, that it's still better than football.

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Putin grants citizenship to Steven Seagal

sky.com

Putin grants Russian citizenship to US action star Steven Seagal

The actor has been a regular visitor to Russia in recent years and has accompanied Putin to several martial arts events.

15:57, UK, Thursday 03 November 2016



Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed an order to give citizenship to American action star Steven Seagal.

The 64-year old has been a vocal supporter of President Putin and a regular visitor to the country - where he has attended several martial arts events with the Russian leader.

"He has been insistent for a long time in asking to be granted Russian citizenship," said Mr Putin's spokesman Dmitry Perkov.

"He is known for his warm feelings to our country, he never made a secret of it."



Seagal is known for his love of martial arts, his Buddhist faith and his Under Siege films - where he played a former special forces member turned cook.

Russia's deputy prime minister, Dmitry Rogozin, tweeted on Wednesday: "I congratulate my friend Steve on the fact that now he has become our compatriot!"

In the 1990s, the actor - who has Russian heritage - opened a branch of the restaurant chain Planet Hollywood in Moscow, and has since participated in a number of publicity campaigns for Russian companies.

"The first time I walked into his home I saw a life-sized statue of Kano Jigoro, who is the founder of judo," the actor told of his first contact with President Putin.



"So I was immediately taken and impressed and sort of wanting to get to know this man deeper and deeper."

Steven Seagal is not the first celebrity to be awarded citizenship by the Kremlin.

French actor Gerard Depardieu got his in 2013 and was offered an apartment in a small town.

Depardieu said at the time he was leaving France to avoid proposed tax increases.

US boxer Roy Jones Jr got his Russian passport last year, shortly after writing in his website "this is the happiest day of my life".

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The Quirky Questions of Wynkyn de Worde - Medievalists.net

medievalists.net

November 6, 2015 by Medievalists.net

From the 'chicken or egg' question to age of a mouse, some of the riddles from England's oldest joke book.



Chicken or egg? Photo by Ruben Alexander / Flickr

Wynkyn de Worde had come to London in around the year 1476 to work for William Caxton, the first person in England to run a printing press. After Caxton died, Wynkyn took over the business and would go on to publish over 400 books over the late 15th and early 16th centuries. He published a wide variety of works, ranging from religious texts to romantic novels, and even children's books.

In the the year 1511 he printed a short book called *The Demaundes Joyous*, which can be translated as *Amusing Questions*. Considered to be the oldest joke book in England, it consists of riddle-type questions with (somewhat) funny answers. Here are sixteen of these questions:

How many calves' tails would it take to reach from the earth to the sky?

No more than one, if it be long enough.

What is the distance from the surface of the sea to the deepest part thereof?

Only a stone's throw.

What is it that never was and never will be?

A mouse's nest in a cat's ear.

Why do men make an oven in a town?

Because they cannot make a town in an oven.

How may a man discern a cow in a flock of sheep?

By his eyesight.

Why does a cow lie down?

Because it cannot sit.

What is it that never freezes?

Boiling water.

Which was first, the hen or the egg?

The hen, at the creation.

How many straws go to a goose's nest?

Not one, for straws not having feet cannot go anywhere.

Who killed the fourth part of all the people in the world?

Cain when he killed Abel.

How would you say two paternosters, when you know God made but one paternoster?

Say one twice over.

Which are the most profitable saints of the church?

Those painted on the glass windows, for they keep the wind from wasting the candles.

Who were the persons that made all, and sold all, that bought all and lost all?

A smith made an awl and sold it to a shoemaker, who lost it.

Why does a dog turn round three times before he lies down?

Because he doesn't know his bed's head from the foot thereof.

What is the worst bestowed charity that one can give?

Alms to a blind man; for he would be glad to see the person hanged that gave it to him.

What is the age of a field-mouse ?

A year. And the age of a hedgehog is three times that of a mouse, and the life of a dog is three times that of a hedge-hog, and the life of a horse is three times that of a dog, and the life of a man is three times that of a horse, and the fife of a goose is three times that of a man, and the life of a swan is three times that of a goose, and the life of a swallow three times that of a swan, and the life of an eagle three times that of a swallow, and the life of a serpent three times that of an eagle, and the life of a raven is three times that of a serpent, and the life of a hart is three times that of a raven, and an oak grows five hundred years, and fades five hundred years.

These riddles from *The Demaundes Joyous* were edited and translated in *The book of days: a miscellany of popular antiquities in connection with the calendar*, by Robert Chambers, published in 1879. You can also find them in ***The Demaundes Joyous : a facsimile of the first English riddle book***, edited by John Wardroper, and published in 1971.

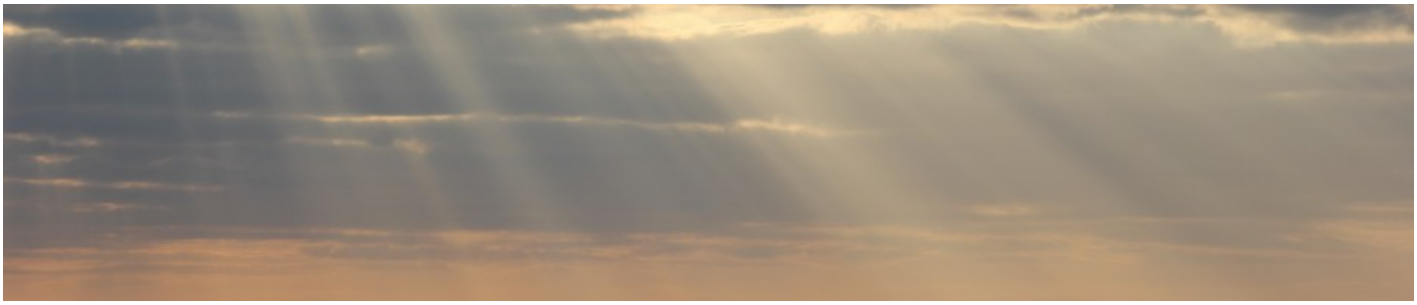


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Radcliffe Tower and the sad tale of Fair Ellen

lancashirefolk.com



Posted onOctober 13, 2016byLancashireFolk



radcliffe-tower

Radcliffe Tower, on Church Street, is all that remains of a manor house built in 1403. It once had two towers and a moat but most of it was demolished in the 19th century. The remaining tower is now, fortunately, a protected site.

An old ballad tells the story of Fair Ellen who lived here and who was killed on the orders of her stepmother, who was racked with jealousy because her new husband loved his daughter so much. She then had some of Ellen cooked in a pie and served it to her father, claiming the meat was venison. A simple scullery boy had witnessed all this; indeed, he had been so distressed that he had begged to be killed in Ellen's place, but the jealous stepmother would not change her mind.

When Ellen's father was served with the grisly pie, he said he would not eat until his beautiful daughter Ellen had joined them at the table. The jealous stepmother had guessed that this might happen and explained Ellen's absence by saying she had gone to live in a nunnery. Ellen's father believed this tale, unlikely though it was, and was grief-stricken at the loss of his beloved daughter. He swore that he would not eat again until she was restored to him.

Ellen's father kept to his word and refused to eat, for days and weeks. At last, the simple scullery boy confessed everything to Ellen's father, including the fact that he had offered his own life in exchange for Fair Ellen's. Ellen's father was so incensed that he caused his wicked wife to be burned at the stake for her evil deed, and took the scullery boy as his legal son and heir.

Whilst this legend is almost certainly fictitious, it was memorialised in a popular ballad and so became believed as fact. A family tombstone, made of purest white alabaster and showing a medieval knight and his lady, in the church at Radcliffe, was said to show Ellen's father and his unfortunate daughter, the whiteness of the stone representing the pure innocence of the pair. The memorial became badly chipped because of the many superstitious people who came to break off a small piece, in the belief that it would bring luck or perhaps effect miraculous cures. The damage was so great that the stone eventually had to be removed and placed beneath the floor of the church, to prevent it being destroyed entirely. When enough time had passed for the superstition to have waned, it was retrieved and rehomed in the chancel.

Today, Radcliffe Tower is said to be haunted by a black dog which, for some reason, is said to be connected to Fair Ellen. If it exists at all, it probably has a story all its own…

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One Response to *Radcliffe Tower and the sad tale of Fair Ellen*

1. Deanna L Roesler says:
October 13, 2016 at 3:00 pm

Yikes that's quite a grisly tale for this morning but wow!

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THE LOCAL at

The Local



Radioactive uranium rocks on display in Austrian schools

The Local · 24 Oct 2016, 15:44

Published: 24 Oct 2016 15:44 GMT+02:00

Austrian education officials have carried out urgent checks in school buildings across the country after one of the stones on display in a classroom turned out to be radioactive uranium.

The shocking discovery was made by chance when an antinuclear campaigner gave a lecture to a science class, and decided to bring one of the old wristwatches from the 1960s that has a so-called radium dial.

The numerals on the watch contained radium which helps them to glow in the dark and were created when little was known about the damage caused by radiation.

The antinuclear campaigner had wanted to demonstrate how radioactive the watches were when he turned up at the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart School in the city of Salzburg.

The expert, Thomas Neff, said: "I brought the old watch from the sixties which lights up brightly at night because of the radiation."

He said the watch had been carefully sealed so that nothing could leak out, but despite that the Geiger counter had notched up 1,200 counts per minute, 20 times the normal value.

Yet as he passed near to the collection of rocks, minerals and fossils that were on display in the classroom, Neff’s Geiger counter almost "exploded" with over 102,000 counts per minute.

The class was evacuated and experts called in and discovered that one of the rocks was a uranium rock.

If the non-measurable alpha-radiation were to be included, the actual radiation exposure should be at least 250,000 counts per minute, according to local media.

Thomas Neff said: "If you had this rock the whole year in your bag, you would get around 210 millisievert exposure. The exposure to radiation from natural sources is only 2.8 millisievert in a whole year in Austria."

To put this into perspective, in the US the maximum allowable yearly occupational dose is 50 millisievert, while 100 millisievert exposure per year is the lowest yearly dose linked to a likely increase in cancer risk. Yet for severe radiation poisoning, at least 2,000 millisievert would be needed.

The alarm caused checks to be made at other schools in the Salzburg area, and of the 373 notified 11 schools discovered that a total of 38 pieces from their geology collections contained uranium rocks.

Education chiefs said that none of the schools had realised the danger of the radioactive rocks that they had on display.

The radiological laboratory in Austria said: "The radioactive screening and the risk assessment show a basic risk potential in Salzburg schools in case of improper storage."

All of the radioactive rock samples are currently in the radiological laboratory at the University of Graz, with one exception. A fish fossil that also turned out to be radioactive can still be shown in the biology area in a state school after it was deemed to have low enough radioactivity to not pose any risk.

Story courtesy of Central European News.

The Local Europe AB
Östgötagatan 12
116 25 Stockholm
Sweden

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Police: Ex-Con Arrested For Ramen Noodle Attack On His Boyfriend

thesmokinggun.com

the smoking gun SINCE 1997

November 14, 2016

A Florida man was arrested for domestic battery after striking his live-in boyfriend with a cup of ramen



noodles, police report.

Michael Herrick, 40, and his beau “got into a verbal argument at their residence in regards to questions of infidelity,” according to an arrest affidavit detailing the confrontation Friday.

The 12:30 AM dispute in the couple’s Pinellas Park home turned violent when Herrick threw a cup of ramen noodles at the victim, who was struck in the neck by the noodles. Herrick, cops noted, said that “water was thrown on him” prior to his noodle tossing.

After cops concluded that Herrick was the incident’s primary aggressor, he was arrested for domestic battery. The 6’ 7”, 200-pound Herrick was booked into jail on the misdemeanor count and released from custody yesterday afternoon on his own recognizance.

Herrick’s rap sheet includes prior convictions for grand theft, passing bad checks, and violating probation.

The Smoking Gun

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The Razor Blade in the Apple: The Social Construction of Urban Legends

Joel Best and Gerald T. Horiuchi

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Abstract

This paper examines the widespread belief that anonymous sadists give children dangerous treats on Halloween. A review of news stories about Halloween sadism from 1958 to 1983 suggests that the threat has been greatly exaggerated. Halloween sadism can be viewed as an urban legend, which emerged during the early 1970s to give expression to growing fears about the safety of children, the danger of crime, and other sources of social strain. Urban legends, like collective behavior and social problems construction, are responses to social strain, shaped by the perception of the threat and social organization.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS, Vol. 32, No. 5, June 1985

THE RAZOR BLADE IN THE APPLE: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF URBAN LEGENDS*

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This paper examines the widespread belief that anonymous sadists give children dangerous treats on Halloween. A review of news stories about Halloween sadism from 1958 to 1983 suggests that the threat has been greatly exaggerated. Halloween sadism can be viewed as an urban legend, which emerged during the early 1970s to give expression to growing fears about the safety of children, the danger of crime, and other sources of social strain. Urban legends, like collective behavior and social problems construction, are responses to social strain, shaped by the perception of the threat and social organization.

The 1970s witnessed the discovery of a frightening new deviant – the Halloween sadist, who gave dangerous, adulterated treats to children. Each year, Halloween's approach brought warnings to parents:

> . . . that plump red apple that Junior gets from a kindly old woman down the block . . . may have a razor blade hidden inside (*New York Times*, 1970).
>
> If this year's Halloween follows form, a few children will return home with something more than an upset tummy: in recent years, several children have died and hundreds have narrowly escaped injury from razor blades, sewing needles and shards of glass purposefully put into their goodies by adults (*Newsweek*, 1975).
>
> It's Halloween again and time to remind you that. . . . [s]omebody's child will become violently ill or die after eating poisoned candy or an apple containing a razor blade (Van Buren, 1983).

Various authorities responded to the threat: legislatures in California (1971) and New Jersey (1982) passed laws against Halloween sadism; schools trained children to inspect their treats for signs of tampering; and some communities tried to ban trick-or-treating (Trubo, 1974). According to press reports, many parents restricted their children's trick-or-treating, examined their treats, or arranged parties or other indoor celebrations (*New York Times*, 1972; *Los Angeles Times*, 1982). By 1984, the threat of Halloween sadists was apparently taken for granted. Doubts about the threat's reality rarely appeared in print. Several Oregon third graders wrote letters to a newspaper: "I wish people wouldn't put poison in our Halloween treats" (*Times*, 1984). Adults questioned for an Illinois newspaper's "Sidewalk Interview" column (*DeKalb Daily Chronicle*, 1984) expressed concern: " . . . part of it is checking to make sure you know your neighbors and checking the candy. I think it's terrible that people are doing this and I guess people's morals have to be examined." "Dear Abby" printed a letter describing a North Carolina hospital's program to X-ray treats (Van Buren, 1984); radiologists at a Hanford, California hospital checked 500 bags of treats (*Fresno Bee*, 1984). In 1985, 327 students at California State University, Fresno wrote essays for an upper-division writing examination, advocating the abolition of some holiday. Nearly a third (105 students) wrote about Halloween, and 90 percent of those essays mentioned the threat of Halloween sadism.

Halloween sadism is thought to involve random, vicious, unprovoked attacks against small children. The attacks seem irrational, and the attackers are routinely described as disturbed or insane.

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* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 1983 meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association. We want to thank Gary Alan Fine, Joseph F. Jones, and David F. Luckenbill for their helpful comments.
Correspondence to: Best, Department of Sociology, California State University, Fresno, CA 93740.

These "child-haters" are theorized to "have had a really deprived childhood" having been "abused as children," they are now "frustrated and filled with resentment against the world in general" (Isaacs and Royeton, 1982:69; *New York Times*, 1970; Trubo, 1974:28). Law enforcement officials and the media reaffirm that the threat is real, urging parents to protect their children against sadistic attacks.

Although Halloween sadism is widely regarded as a serious threat, it has received little scholarly attention. In this paper, we examine the phenomenon from a sociological perspective, addressing three issues. First, we try to assess the incidence of Halloween sadism in order to demonstrate that the threat has been greatly exaggerated. Second, we draw upon a concept from folklore studies to argue that the belief in Halloween sadism is best viewed as an "urban legend." Finally, we suggest that urban legends can be understood as unconstructed social problems. Like collective hysteria and organized claims-making efforts, urban legends are a product of social strain and of the social organization of the response to that strain.

A HOLIDAY FOR SADISTS?

There are no reliable official statistics on Halloween sadism. Minor incidents, particularly those that do not involve injuries, may never be reported to the police. Cases that are reported may be classified under a wide range of offenses, and there is no centralized effort to compile cases from different jurisdictions. Moreover, the circumstances of the crime—the young victim, the unfamiliar assailant, the difficulty in remembering which treats came from which houses—make it unlikely that offenders will be arrested.

While the true incidence of Halloween sadism cannot be measured, newspaper reports reveal changes in public reaction to the threat. Therefore, we examined the coverage of Halloween sadism in four daily newspapers between 1959 and 1984. For the *New York Times*, we checked all entries under "Halloween" in the paper's annual indexes for information about Halloween sadism. The *New York Times Index* proved to be unusually complete, listing even short items of a sentence or two.[1] The published indexes for two other major regional newspapers, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*, were less thorough, so for each year, we read both papers' issues for the first three days in November. Finally, we examined all Halloween stories in the files of the *Fresno Bee*. Our search found stories about 76 alleged incidents of Halloween sadism, which included at least the community where the incident occurred and the nature of the attack.[2] Table 1 shows the number of incidents reported in each year.

Obviously, the 76 incidents identified through this procedure do not form a complete list of cases of Halloween sadism. However, there are several reasons why it is unlikely that many serious incidents—involving deaths or serious injuries—were overlooked. First, the papers' coverage was national. The 76 reported incidents came from 15 states and two Canadian provinces; while each of the four newspapers concentrated on incidents in its own region, all reported cases from other regions. All four included at least one case from the South—the only major region without a newspaper in the sample. Second, the 76 reported cases were generally not serious. Injuries were reported in only 20 cases, and only two of these involved deaths. It seems unlikely that newspapers would choose to print accounts of minor incidents, while ignoring more serious crimes. This impression is bolstered further by the frequent appearance of stories—often from different states—about other Halloween tragedies: children struck by cars and other accidental deaths; people murdered when

1. On the reliability of this index, see Troyer and Markle (1983:141–42).
2. In addition, all entries under "Halloween" in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and MEDLINE—the computerized medical data base—were checked. Neither popular magazines nor the medical literature described any additional cases of Halloween sadism. Every case was included if the news report treated it as an instance of Halloween sadism. As noted below, some of the cases included were of questionable authenticity.

TABLE 1

Reported Incidents of Halloween Sadism, 1958–84

Year	Number of Incidents	Year	Number of Incidents
1958	0	1972	1
1959	1	1973	4
1960	0	1974	1
1961	0	1975	2
1962	1	1976	2
1963	1	1977	0
1964	3	1978	0
1965	1	1979	3
1966	5	1980	0
1967	4	1981	0
1968	3	1982	12
1969	7	1983	1
1970	10	1984	0
1971	14		

they opened their doors, expecting trick-or-treaters; racial disturbances; vandalism; and so on. At least two of the newspapers carried reports on each of the two deaths attributed to Halloween sadists. It is therefore unlikely that the list of 76 incidents excludes any fatal instances of Halloween sadism.

Table 1 reveals two peaks in the pattern of reporting. Thirty-one of the 76 incidents occurred in the three years from 1969 to 1971. This wave of reports encouraged recognition of Halloween sadism as a threat. As a holiday when millions of children venture out at night, Halloween has a long history of tragic accidents. Routinely, newspapers and magazines print lists of safety tips, warning parents against flammable costumes, masks that obscure the wearer's vision, and the like. A systematic review of such lists found no mention of the danger posed by sadists before 1972; but, from that year on, lists of safety tips almost invariably warned parents to inspect their children's treats for signs of tampering. At the same time that these warnings spread, reports of Halloween sadism fell to a few per year until 1982, when there was a dramatic increase. Of course, this reflected the fear caused by the Tylenol murders. A month before Halloween, seven people died after swallowing poisoned Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules. In the weeks that followed, there were hundreds of reports of "copycats" adulterating food, over-the-counter medications, and other household products. As Halloween approached, the media repeatedly warned parents that trick-or-treaters would be in danger. After raising the specter of Halloween sadism, the press naturally covered the incidents that were reported. A year later, however, coverage fell to pre-Tylenol levels.

Examining the reports of the 76 incidents leads to three conclusions. First, the threat of Halloween sadism has been greatly exaggerated. There is simply no basis for *Newsweek*'s (1975) claim that "several children have died." The newspapers attributed only two deaths to Halloween sadists, and neither case fit the image of a maniacal killer randomly attacking children. In 1970, five-year-old Kevin Toston died after eating heroin supposedly hidden in his Halloween candy. While this story received considerable publicity, newspapers gave less coverage to the follow-up report that Kevin had found the heroin in his uncle's home, not his treats (*San Fransisco Chronicle*, 1970). The second death is more notorious. In 1974, eight-year-old Timothy O'Bryan died after eating Halloween candy contaminated with cyanide. Investigators concluded that his father had contaminated the treat (Grider, 1982). Thus, both boys' deaths were caused by family members, rather than by anonymous sadists.[3]

3. The particulars of these cases are sometimes forgotten, so that the deaths continue to be used as proof that Halloween sadists pose a real threat. Trubo (1974:28) describes Toston as "the victim of a sadistic prankster." Similarly, an anonymous reviewer of an earlier draft of this paper recalled the O'Bryan case but did not mention that it was the boy's father who was convicted.

Similarly, while the newspaper reports rarely gave detailed information about the remaining 18 cases in which injuries were reported, most of the victims were not seriously hurt. Several incidents involved minor cuts and puncture wounds; what was apparently the most serious wound required 11 stitches. In short, there were no reports where an anonymous sadist caused death or a life-threatening injury; there is no justification for the claim that Halloween sadism stands as a major threat to U.S. children.[4]

A second conclusion is that many, if not most, reports of Halloween sadism are of questionable authenticity. Children who go trick-or-treating know about Halloween sadism; they have been warned by their parents, teachers, and friends. A child who "discovers" an adulterated treat stands to be rewarded with the concerned attention of parents and, perhaps, police officers and reporters. Such a hoax is consistent with Halloween traditions of trickery, just as the fear of sadists resembles the more traditional dread of ghosts and witches (Santino, 1983). The 76 reported incidents included two cases that were identified as hoaxes at the time, and it seems likely that other cases involved undiscovered fraud. After all, it is remarkable that three-quarters of the children who reported receiving contaminated treats had no injuries. Efforts to systematically follow up reports of Halloween sadism have concluded that the vast majority were fabrications. After Halloween 1972, *Editor and Publisher* (1973) – the trade magazine of the newspaper industry – examined several papers' efforts to trace all local reports of Halloween sadism; it concluded that virtually all the reports were hoaxes. Ten years later, in the wake of the Tylenol scare, the confectionary industry tried to reassure potential customers in a "white paper" on Halloween candy tampering in 1982 (National Confectioners Association et al., n.d.) The report noted that "more than 95 percent of the 270 potential Halloween 1982 candy adulterations analyzed by the Food and Drug Administration have shown no tampering, which has led one FDA official to characterize the period as one of 'psychosomatic mass hysteria.' " Further, a confectionary industry survey of police departments in "24 of the nation's largest cities, as well as smaller towns in which highly-publicized incidents were alleged to have occurred, found two reports of injuries – neither requiring medical treatment – from among the hundreds of claims of candy tampering."[5] Thus, not only does a survey of press coverage reveal fewer reports of Halloween sadism than might be expected, but there is good reason to suspect that many of the reports are unfounded.

Third, the press should not be held responsible for the widespread belief that Halloween sadism poses a serious threat. While the news media can manufacture "crime waves" by suddenly focusing on previously ignored offenses (Fishman, 1978), the press has given Halloween sadism relatively little publicity. Many of the 76 reported incidents received minimal coverage, in news stories of only two or three sentences. Often the reports were embedded in larger stories, such as a wire service summary of Halloween news from around the country. Nor did popular magazines highlight Halloween sadism; before 1982, only two short articles focused on the problem. The absence of

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4. Certainly other elements of everyday life, while not receiving as much attention, are far more hazardous. In 1980–81, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (1982), 60 children under age five died in "product associated deaths" involving nursery equipment and supplies; another 13 deaths involved toys.

5. In one apparent hoax:

> . . . a youth claimed to have ingested an insecticide-saturated candy bar. . . . Testing showed no traces of any chemicals in the youth's blood. . . . although there was insecticide on one end of the bar, the side of the candy bar that had been biten into was insecticide-free. (National Confectioners Association et al., n.d.)

Similarly, over 80% of the reports of so-called "copycat" poisonings that followed the Tylenol deaths were apparently fabricated (*Time*, 1982). Some were anonymous pranks, but others involved publicity-seekers or schemes to collect insurance settlements from manufacturers. As in the case of Halloween sadism, the threat was exaggerated: Congressional hearings denounced "a new kind of thug that is stalking the American communities" (U.S. Congress: House of Representatives, 1982:2), while psychiatrists speculated that "copycat criminals may have weak ego structures and 'have difficulty running their lives' " (*New York Times*, 1982).

authentic cases of serious injuries caused by Halloween sadism undoubtedly explains this limited coverage. While the publication of annual warnings to parents to inspect their children's treats, as well as occasional short items reporting minor incidents, may help keep the fear of Halloween sadism alive, the media do not seem to be the principal channel by which people learn of the danger. Rather, knowledge of Halloween sadism apparently spreads by word of mouth.

ROOTS OF AN URBAN LEGEND

The belief in Halloween sadism as a serious threat can be understood using a concept developed by folklorists: Halloween sadism is an *urban legend* (Grider, 1982). Urban legends are contemporary, orally transmitted tales that "often depict a clash between modern conditions and some aspect of a traditional life-style" (Brunvand, 1981:189). Whereas traditional legends often feature supernatural themes, most urban legends "are grounded in human baseness . . ." (Fine, 1980:227). They describe criminal attacks, contaminated consumer goods, and other risks of modern life.[6] Halloween sadism combines two themes found in several other urban legends: danger to children (e.g., the babysitter who cooks an infant in a microwave oven; the child kidnapped from a department store or an amusement park); and contamination of food (e.g., the mouse in the soft-drink bottle; the Kentucky Fried Rat) (Brunvand, 1981, 1984; Fine, 1979, 1980, 1985). These legends, like that of the Halloween sadist, are typically told as true stories. They "gratify our desire to know about and to try to understand bizarre, frightening, and potentially dangerous or embarrassing events that *may* have happened" (Brunvand, 1981:12) Urban legends may even have a factual basis; soft-drink manufacturers have been sued by people claiming to have found mice in their drinks (Fine, 1979). Whether a legend begins with a real incident or as a fictional tale, it is told and retold, often evolving as it spreads. On occasion, urban legends appear in newspaper stories, reinforcing the tale's credibility (Brunvand, 1981, 1984). The belief in Halloween sadism is maintained through orally transmitted warnings about the dangers contemporary society poses for the traditional custom of trick-or-treating. These warnings, which greatly exaggerate the threat, are an urban legend. That some incidents of Halloween sadism have occurred, and that the media have reported such incidents, does not disqualify the warnings as legends.

Viewing Halloween sadism as an urban legend helps explain why the belief became widespread when it did. News reports of Halloween sadism are not new (cf., *New York Times*, 1950).[7] But the general perception that Halloween sadism is a serious threat can be dated to the early 1970s. This was the period when the press began reporting more incidents and warning parents to inspect treats, and legislatures began passing laws against Halloween sadism. In general, urban legends are products of social tension or strain. They express fears that the complexities of modern society threaten the traditional social order (Fine, 1980, 1985). Urban life requires contact with strangers who—the legends suggest—may be homicidal maniacs, unscrupulous merchants, voyeurs, or otherwise threatening. By repeating urban legends, people can respond to social strain, expressing their doubts about the modern world.

While it is obviously impossible to establish a causal link between particular social tensions and the spread of a particular urban legend, folklorists typically examine a legend's elements for clues

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6. The term "urban legend" is generally used by folklorists to distinguish modern folk tales from those told in traditional societies; it ignores the differences between contemporary urban and rural communities. Some familiar urban legends include: "The Hook"—a maniac who terrorizes a couple parked in a lover's lane; the black widow spider that nests in a beehive hairdo; the deep-fried rat sold at a fried-chicken franchise; and "The Choking Doberman," that swallows a burglar's fingers. Brunvand's (1981, 1984) books present several dozen such tales.

7. This case involved giving children pennies heated on a skillet. Apparently this was an early image of Halloween sadism; Grider (1982) recalls a heated pennies legend circulating among Texas children in the 1940s. Of course, the fear of Halloween sadism also seems linked to traditional warnings about accepting candy from strangers.

about its roots (Brunvand, 1981, 1984; Fine, 1980). Some legends feature a transparent message, but others are more difficult to interpret. In the case of Halloween sadism, a plausible argument can be made that the legend's flowering in the early 1970s was tied to the heightened social strains of that period. The late 1960s and early 1970s were years of unparalleled divisiveness in post-World War II America (Carroll, 1982; O'Neill, 1971). The media exposed several serious crises to the public, including an increasingly unpopular war, ghetto riots, student demonstrations, and increased drug use. It was a period of intense social strain. Three forms of strain that emerged or grew during these years seem related to the growing fear of Halloween sadism.

Threats to Children

The form of strain that seems most clearly linked to a belief in Halloween sadism was the growing sense that children were no longer safe in the United States. During the 1960s and early 1970s, physicians and social workers promoted child abuse as a major social problem; the popular press responded with dozens of dramatic stories about children who had been cruelly treated by their parents (Pfohl, 1977). The rhetoric of this campaign emphasized that all children were potential victims, that child abuse occurred in all sectors of society. But even parents who remained confident that their children would never be abused could worry about losing their children to other threats. Older children adopted radical political views and experimented with illegal drugs.[8] Other parents found their grown children facing a less symbolic threat—death in Vietnam. The social conflicts that marked America during these years must have left many parents wondering if their hopes for the next generation would be fulfilled.

Since the emergence of the belief in Halloween sadism, the generation gap seems to have narrowed, but threats to children remain visible. The movement against child abuse continues to spread, receiving still more publicity. And, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, emerging campaigns against incest, child pornography, child molesting, and abortion may have contributed to a larger sense of children in jeopardy. Perhaps the clearest link between threats to children and the fear of Halloween sadism appeared during the series of murders of Atlanta schoolchildren. In 1980, STOP, an organization of the victims' parents, argued that "the city should organize Halloween night events that will minimize dangers to the children" (*New York Times*, 1980).[9]

Fear of Crime

Other forms of strain involved more general threats. Survey data reveal that the fear of crime grew substantially between the mid-1960s and the early 1970s (Erskine, 1974; Stinchcombe et al., 1980). Although violent crimes often involve offenders and victims who are acquainted, the fear

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8. The possibility that their children might adopt disapproved values may have suggested betrayal to some parents, creating another source of strain—ambivalence toward one's children. This ambivalence is nicely revealed in a popular cultural genre which regained popularity during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In popular novels and films (e.g., *The Exorcist* and *Rosemay's Baby*), the horror tale—traditionally associated with Halloween—took on a new emphasis: stories about children with demonic powers.

The concern with growing drug use may have been especially important in fostering the initial fear of Halloween sadism. Although only one of the 76 newspaper reports involved "hippies" giving drugs to children, early oral versions of contaminated-treat tales often took this form. (On a related, early 1970s legend—that LSD was being distributed on pictures of Mickey Mouse, which children might mistake for a lick-on tatoo—see Brunvand, 1984:162–69.) Only later did the razor blade in the apple become the standard image for Halloween sadism. Six on the 12 incidents reported before 1967 involved over-the-counter or prescription drugs; only one involved a sharp object. In contrast, 49 of the 64 reports after 1966 involved razors or other sharp objects, while only four involved drugs. Of course, razor blades, pins, and so on are readily available equipment, which would make it easy to carry out hoaxes.

9. Similarly, the Tylenol poisonings raised the prospect of attacks via product contamination. Like the Atlanta murders, these real crimes by an anonymous sadist led to warnings about Halloween sadists.

of crime focuses on the threat of an anonymous attacker.[10] The threat of an unpredictable, unprovoked criminal attack parallels the Halloween sadist menace.

Mistrust of Others

Survey data also reveal rising expressions of general mistrust during the early 1970s. The proportion of Americans who agreed that ". . . you can't be too careful in dealing with people" rose from 45.6 percent in 1966, to 50.0 percent in 1971, to 54.3 percent in 1973 (Converse et al., 1980:28). Studies of urban dwellers in the 1970s found high levels of mistrust for strangers (Fischer, 1982; Merry, 1981; Suttles, 1972). While warnings about the collapse of the neighborhood in the anonymous modern city have proven exaggerated, the belief that people now live in greater isolation remains widespread. The social conflicts of the 1960s and early 1970s may have encouraged doubts about the trustworthiness of other people. Such doubts provided another form of strain during the period when the belief in Halloween sadism spread.

These sources of strain—threats to children, fear of crime, and mistrust of others—provided a context within which the concern about Halloween sadism could flourish. The Halloween sadist emerged as a symbolic expression of this strain: the sadist, like other dangers, attacks children—society's most vulnerable members; the sadist, like the stereotypical criminal, is an anonymous, unprovoked assailant; and the sadist, like other strangers, must be met by doubt, rather than trust.[11] Placed in the context of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the spread of Halloween sadism is easily understood.

If these sources of strain account for the belief's spread, what explains its persistence? The extraordinary social conflicts of the early 1970s have moderated, yet the belief in Halloween sadism remains. Why? First, some of the same sources of strain continue to exist: the media still publicize threats to children (e.g., child abuse), and the fear of crime and strangers remains high.

Second, and more important, Halloween sadism is an established urban legend; it can remain as a taken-for-granted, if dormant, part of American culture. The survey of newspaper stories found only five reports of Halloween sadism from 1976 to 1981—less than one per year.[12] However, warnings about sadists continued to appear during these years and, of course, the Tylenol poisonings in 1982 led to both predictions and reports of Halloween sadism.

Third, folklorists have traced the evolution of some legends over centuries (Brunvand, 1984). Legends seem most likely to persist when they have a general, underlying message (for instance, warnings about trusting outsiders) which can be tailored to fit new situations. Thus, the dangers of eating commercially prepared food were detailed in nineteenth-century stories about cat meat in baked pies and, more recently, in tales about rats sold at fried-chicken franchises (Fine, 1980; Simpson, 1983). Like other urban legends about homicidal maniacs, the Halloween sadist legend expresses fears about criminal attacks. Given the general nature of this threat, the legend may persist as long as the custom of trick-or-treating.

URBAN LEGENDS AS UNCONSTRUCTED SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Where do urban legends fit within the broader framework of sociological theory? The case of

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10. This fear also found expression in a popular culture horror genre—the "mad slasher" films in which a maniac stalks and kills a series of high school or college students. Interestingly, the first of these films was *Halloween* (1979).

11. Grider (1982:6) agrees: "The Razor Blades Syndrome expresses a deep-rooted fear of strangers, a distrust of old customs and traditions, an acknowledgement of child abuse and infanticide, and an ambivalence toward random, wanton violence."

12. Presumably, incidents continued to be reported during this period. The decline in press coverage may have reflected journalists' doubts about the authenticity of the reports (*Editor and Publisher*, 1973), as well as their recognition that the reported incidents were minor and, given the well-established nature of the legend, no longer newsworthy.

Halloween sadism suggests (1) that urban legends may be viewed as a form of unconstructed social problem, (2) that collective hysteria, urban legends, and social problems construction offer alternative responses to social strain, and (3) that the emergence of a particular response to strain reflects social organization.

At first glance, the fear of Halloween sadists resembles some of the instances of collective hysteria in the collective behavior literature. The Halloween sadist can stand beside the "phantom anesthetist" of Mattoon (Johnson, 1945), the "phantom slasher" of Taipei (Jacobs, 1965), the "June bug epidemic" in a Southern textile plant (Kerckhoff and Back, 1968), and the windshield pitting in Seattle (Medalia and Larsen, 1958) as a focus of exaggerated fears. Studies of collective hysteria usually account for the emergence of hysterical beliefs as a response to social strain: the Mattoon episode occurred during wartime; the workers in the textile plant were putting in heavy overtime, and so on. In response to this strain, there emerges a belief in some threat, "an ambiguous element in the environment with a generalized power to threaten or destroy" (Smelser, 1962:82). This threat is credible, frightening, and difficult to protect oneself against:

> Instead of simply having a feeling that something is awry, the belief in a tangible threat makes it possible to *explain* and *justify* one's sense of discomfort—instead of anxiety, one experiences fear, and it is then possible to act in some meaningful way with respect to this tangible threat rather than just feeling frustrated and anxious. (Kerckhoff and Back, 1968:160–61—emphasis in original)

However, some of this model's key features do not fit the emergence of the belief in Halloween sadism and other urban legends. Collective hysteria is bounded in time and space. Hysterical beliefs are short-lived; they typically emerge, spread, and die within the space of a few days or weeks. Further, they are typically confined to a restricted locality—a single region, town, or facility (Lofland, 1981). In contrast, the belief in Halloween sadists appears to have spread more slowly, over a period of years, and to have become an established, taken-for-granted part of the culture. Nor has the belief observed the normal geographic limits of collective hysteria—reports of Halloween sadism have come from throughout the country, suggesting that the belief is nationwide. If the Halloween sadist resembles the threats identified in instances of collective hysteria, the dynamics of the belief's spread do not fit the hysterical pattern.

The process of social problems construction offers an alternative perspective for understanding the fear of Halloween sadism. Blumer (1971) and Spector and Kitsuse (1973, 1977) defined social problems as products of claims-making activities, in which people call others' attention to social conditions. Thus, the emergence of a social problem is a political process: ". . . recognition by a society of its social problems is a highly selective process, with many harmful social conditions and arrangements not even making a bid for attention and with others falling by the wayside in what is frequently a fierce competitive struggle" (Blumer, 1971:302). Case studies of claims-making focus on the role of social movements (Tierney, 1982), professionals (Pfohl, 1977), the press (Schoenfeld et al., 1979), and other interested parties in constructing social problems. While these studies demonstrate how some claims-making campaigns succeeded, they do not explain why other social conditions, with the potential to be defined as social problems, never reach this status. Emergent or unconstructed social problems are less often studied (Troyer and Markle, 1983, 1984). Urban legends, such as the Halloween sadist, may be seen in these terms.

While the belief in Halloween sadism is widespread, it has not led to effective claims-making activities. Halloween sadism has, for brief occasions, occupied the attention of legislators, city officials, journalists, and PTA associations, but the belief spread largely outside institutionalized channels.[13] The press never reported more than a handful of incidents in a given year, and most

13. Medical professionals, for instance, paid minimal attention to Halloween sadism. MEDLINE listed no articles on the subject from 1966 to 1983.

of these reports were very short; the belief spread informally, by word-of-mouth. Similarly, there was no especially visible response to the threat. By the mid-1970s, the press reported a few organized attempts to thwart sadists—hospitals offering to X-ray treats, communities organizing alternative celebrations, and municipalities passing ordinances against trick-or-treating.[14] But most of these efforts remained localized; they received little publicity and did not lead to a broader, organized response to Halloween sadism. (Similarly, organized campaigns by the confectionary industry to expose fabricated reports of Halloween sadism also failed to attract widespread recognition [*Editor and Publisher*, 1973; National Confectioners Association et al., n.d.].) While it is possible to trace the claims-making activities by which many social problems are constructed, this is not true for Halloween sadism. Although the belief spread widely, it moved largely through informal channels, and the principal reaction—parents restricting their children's trick-or-treating—was equally informal.

This analysis suggests that collective hysteria, urban legends, and social problems construction are alternative responses to social strain, alternatives in which strain is translated into different forms of threat that are spread through different forms of social organization. Strain—discomfort caused by existing social conditions—is made manifest in a perceived threat to the collectivity.[15] This threat may be genuine or false. Commonly, genuine threats identify the source of social strain (e.g., pollution endangers the quality of life), while false threats are a more symbolic expression of strain (e.g., a "June bug" attacks people under a heavy work load). The identification of genuine threats often suggests a solution—something that can be done to reduce or eliminate the threat—while false threats are frequently amorphous and difficult or impossible to manage. In general, collective hysteria and urban legends respond to strain through the identification of false threats, while social problems construction deals with genuine threats. Social organization affects the spread of perceptions of threat. In compact, homogeneous collectivities, collective hysteria can spread quickly. In larger, more diffuse collectivities, it takes longer to attract attention to the threat and to mobilize concerned individuals. Typically, in social problems construction, some individuals take the lead in organizing claims-making activities, while urban legends spread through informal contacts.

The example of Halloween sadism suggests some specific factors that may affect the response to social strain. The reports of Halloween sadism did not lead to collective hysteria for two reasons. First, the belief spread throughout the country, rather than within a compact collectivity. Second, this spread could occur relatively slowly, given the limited nature of the threat. Reports of sadistic incidents posed no threat to other children for another year. There was no urgency to the news; the tale could be disseminated slowly, through informal channels. Although a few organizations began claims-making activities directed at Halloween sadism, little came of their efforts. In part, this may have been caused by the absence of serious, documented sadistic incidents; without genuine atrocities to demonstrate the need for action, claims-makers had trouble making a convincing case. Further, potential social movements aimed at Halloween sadism lacked a well-organized natural constituency; while no one approved of Halloween sadism, no group found it in its interest to mount a sustained campaign against the threat. Again, the fact that the danger was limited to one evening a year may have inhibited the construction of Halloween sadism as a social problem. Nor was it clear how collective action might stop Halloween sadism; parents who worried about the threat found the best protection in individually curtailing their children's trick-or-treating or inspecting

14. While the press routinely interpreted these actions as responses to Halloween sadism, many attempts to restrict trick-or-treating were, in fact, prompted by more traditional Halloween problems, e.g., vandalism or children struck by cars (cf. Trubo, 1974).

15. Social constructionist theorists attack the notion that strain or other objective social conditions offer a sufficient explanation for social problems; they argue that claims-making activities must occur (Blumer, 1971; Spector and Kitsuse, 1977). Troyer and Markle (1983), however, suggest that strain usually, if not always, precedes claims-making.

their treats. Thus, the diffuse collectivity, the infrequency of the reported attacks, the absence of convincing evidence, the lack of interested individuals willing to commit extensive time to the cause, and the difficulty of devising solutions meant that Halloween sadism became the focus of neither collective hysteria nor successful claims-making. Yet, retaining considerable symbolic power as an expression of social strain, Halloween sadism endured as an urban legend.

IMPLICATIONS: "HALLOWEEN AND THE MASS CHILD" REVISITED

Holiday celebrations reflect the larger culture. The events celebrated, as well as the customary ways of celebrating, reveal the society's values and structure. And, as society changes, its holidays often take on new meanings, consistent with the altered culture. Where earlier American celebrations were communal, ceremonial, and often religious or patriotic, contemporary observances tend to be individualistic, materialistic, secular occasions, marked largely by unstructured leisure time (Caplow, 1982; Caplow and Williamson, 1980; Hatch, 1978).[16]

Gregory P. Stone's (1959) "Halloween and the Mass Child" developed this thesis. Stone traced the evolution of Halloween activities in his lifetime, from the elaborate pranks of adolescents in the 1930s, to the playful trick-or-treating of young children in the 1950s. He found the 1950s children did not understand the extortionate premise of "trick or treat;" for them, Halloween was merely an occasion to receive candy. Stone interpreted this shift as consistent with the changes in American values described in Reisman's (1950) *The Lonely Crowd*:

> . . . Reisman's character type of "other-direction" may, indeed, be a *prototype* of American character and not some strange mutation in the northeast. Consumption, tolerance, and conformity were recognizable in the Halloween masquerade of a near-southern town. Production, indignation, and autonomy were not. (Stone, 1959:378—emphasis in original)

Twenty-five years after Stone's analysis, the fear of Halloween sadism has further altered the meaning of Halloween. While Stone saw trick-or-treating as a part of the emerging culture of consumption, folklorists view Halloween as among the least commercialized of modern holidays (Grider, 1982; Santino, 1983). But this informality has been labeled dangerous by those who warn against Halloween sadists. Children are urged to refuse homemade treats and accept only coupons or mass-produced candy with intact wrappings, as though commercialism offers protection.[17] Long celebrated through vandalism and extortion, Halloween has been a symbolic expression of disorder. Today, the Halloween sadist has become an annual reminder of the fragility of the social bond—an expression of growing doubts about the safety of children, the trustworthiness of strangers, and the strength of the modern urban community.

Examining the fear of Halloween sadists reveals topics that deserve further sociological attention. First, urban legends merit more analysis as expressions of social strain. Second, theories of social problems construction need to address the processes by which topics become the focus of claims-making activities. Most existing case studies describe relatively successful claims-making efforts, taking for granted the appropriateness of those efforts. But a complete theory of social problems construction would also examine the earliest stages in the process, asking why some social conditions fail to become the focus for claims-making, how strain, social organization, and other social conditions generate claims-making, and why some strain is translated into collective hysteria or urban legends, rather than claims-making. To define social problems in terms of claims-making without identifying the roots of that process begs the question of why some phenomena become social problems.

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16. When they are inconsistent with modern practices, earlier forms of celebrating may be forgotten. On the drunken, riotous Christmas customs of the nineteenth-century working class, see Davis (1982).
17. The intense reaction to the Tylenol murders reflected consumers' dependence on mass-produced food and medications. "The revolt of the product is the ultimate nightmare for a society like ours" (Spiro, 1982:11). However, new standards for tamper-resistant packaging apparently reestablished confidence in product safety.

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Reaching Out From Beyond: The Ghostly Hand Print of The Bridgewater Triangle

thebridgewatertriangle.com

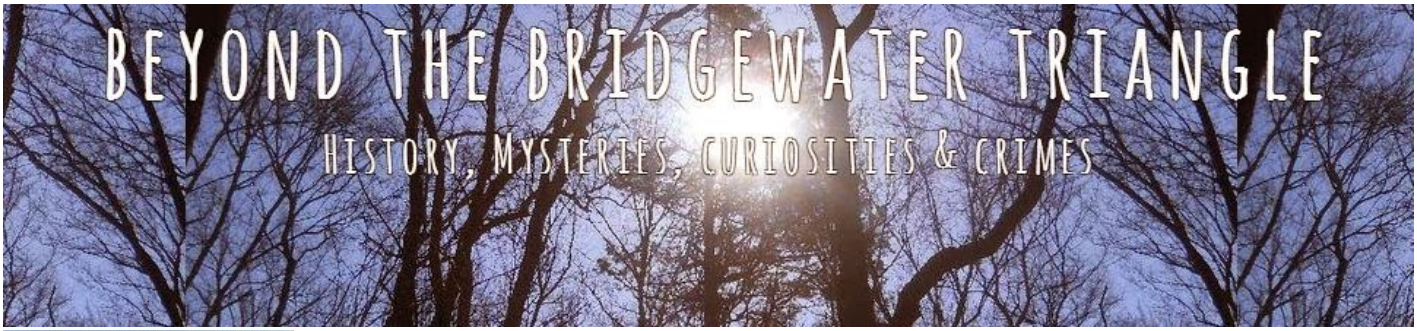




Photo by Chrs Moody.

Just in time for Halloween in 1903, newspapers were calling the mystery of ghost hand print that appeared on a window pane in Fall River, Massachusetts a "a striking Spiritualistic manifestation." Hundreds flocked to the home of one Thomas Cross--an "enthusiastic believer in cult" and known Spiritualist--to inspect the mysterious hand print. The print was believed to have been left by the late Mrs. Cross, also an active Spiritualist. One of the Cross' daughters refused to believe in the "other side" and it was to her that hand print first appeared. It was theorized that the ghost of Mrs. Cross was making one final attempt to convince her daughter that there was indeed an afterlife. The Cross family claimed that the hand print could not be removed from the glass. Even after repeated efforts, the stubborn hand print could not be erased. Even acid had been applied to the window in a final attempt after using conventional window-washing methods. Acid did not even prove strong enough to remove the ghostly print. The Cross family claimed that any effort used to remove the hand print would only result in the hand print standing out more prominently. A local newspaper reported on October 29, 1903:

"On a pane of glass in a kitchen window can be plainly seen what appears to be the imprint of a woman's hand, the palm, the fingers and thumb, and even the lines of the palm being distinctly visible. All efforts to remove the imprint have failed...The fingers are spread wide apart, and the knuckles are large as though the hand had been used to hard work. The more enthusiastic among the believers in Spiritualism who have witnessed the phenomenon do not hesitate to say that they detect the mark on the third finger showing where the wedding ring was long worn.

Mrs. Cross died two months ago. She too was an ardent Spiritualist, but the children, of whom there are six...know little of the doctrine. The oldest, a girl of 19 years named Elliza, is skeptical of the faith of her parents, and Spiritualists interpret the appearances of the hand on the window glass as a sign to the doubting daughter from the mother.

The had was discovered by the girl as she was wasting the window, and repeated efforts have failed to erase the imprint. Hot water and soaps, acids and muscular effort have so far served only to make the hand stand out more plainly.



FALL RIVER HAS A MYSTERY

Woman's Hand Imprinted on Window Pane.

Spiritualists Excited by "Message From Mother."

Humble Home of Thomas Cross, Enthusiastic Believer in Cult, Center of Attraction for Believers and

"The merely curious who have visited the place have bent their energies to finding an explanation of the mystery and have even gone so far as to remove the window from its place to permit a more thorough examination. One after another have given up the puzzle.

Mr. Cross does not attach great importance to the matter, as he says he is accustomed to receiving still more wonderful communications from the departed."

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Read the chilling clues a suspected serial killer left in dozens of Amazon product reviews

rawstory.com

Travis Gettys
07 Nov 2016 at 12:40 ET



Todd Kohlhepp

A suspected serial killer left chilling clues — sprinkled with Eagles lyrics — in dozens of Amazon product reviews.

Todd Kohlhepp has been charged with kidnapping Kala Brown and is suspected of killing her boyfriend, Charlie Carver, and possibly six other people.

Investigators in Spartanburg County, South Carolina, are examining 140 product reviews that Kolhepp apparently posted on Amazon after purchasing 95 secluded acres near Woodruff nearly two and a half years ago, reported *The Greenville News*.

The reviews, which were posted under the name “me” but were linked to a wish list for Kohlhepp, covered a variety of items that may have been used to abduct and kill his victims.

“solid locks.. have 5 on a shipping container.. wont stop them.. but sure will slow them down til they are too old to care. (sic)” the reviewer posted.

Another review, posted in September 2014, praised a knife’s quality: “havnet (sic) stabbed anyone yet…… yet…. but I am keeping the dream alive and when I do, it will be with a quality tool like this…”

The same user urged consumers to keep a folding shovel in their car “for when you have to hide the bodies and you left the full size shovel at home…. does not come with a midget, which would have been nice.”

The 30-year-old Brown, who went missing with her boyfriend in August, was found chained by the neck and ankles in a metal shed, and Carver’s body was found shot to death and buried on Kohlhepp’s property.

Kohlhepp pleaded guilty in 1987 to kidnapping and committing a dangerous crime against children in the first degree, and he served all 15 years of his sentence and was released in 2001.

According to court records, Kohlhepp, then 15, used his father’s handgun to force a 14-year-old neighbor into his home, where he restrained her with duct tape and raped the girl.

Prosecutors were furious that Kohlhepp was allowed to plead guilty to a non-sexual crime.

“It would appear that his behavior has been progressively worsening and now, it has escalated to the point where he has sexually assaulted an innocent child,” wrote Kim Otto, a deputy adult probation officer. “One can only speculate as to where the defendant’s behavior will lead. It is this writer’s opinion that it is this type of individual, one with little or no conscience, who presents the greatest risk to the community.”

After his release from prison, Kohlhepp moved from Arizona to South Carolina, got a pilot’s license, earned a degree at the University of South Carolina Upstate and pursued a real estate career.

The reviews linked to Kohlhepp’s wish list occasionally refer to the Eagles song, “Hotel California,” where guests “can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.”

“now my locks have locks… place is hotel california now..” the reviewer posted in January 2015.

Kohlhepp may have posted lyrics from “Hotel California” on Carver’s Facebook page Oct. 1, more than a month after the couple went missing.

“Last thing I remember, I was running for the door,” the post read. “I had to find the passage back to the place I was before. ‘Relax,’ said the night man. ‘We are programmed to receive. You can check out any time you like, but you can never leave.’”

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The Collinwood School

realhaunts.com

Real Haunted House

ClevelandOhio

Now a state monument, this school was the site of a huge fire in the early twentieth century. Over one hundred people died because the doors in the school opened inwardly rather than outwardly, preventing escape. Residents that live near the school have reported seeing a light come on in one room, traverse the hall and go back from whence it came. Police investigated and found no one living in the building.

33 comments on this haunted house. Share your story »

33 CommentsLeave a comment

Chris says:March 18, 2006, 7:03 pm

That isn't possible. First of all, the school burned down to the ground. A new school was built next to it, but that was later shut down and sat empty for years.Then, they tore that one down and built a brand new one in the same spot as the old one before it. A memorial sits in the exact spot where the school sat, and has been there for years!

Crissy says:May 10, 2006, 5:07 pm

Once my roomate was doing research on this fire. We went to the memorial on the anniversary of the fire. I was furious at all the garbage laying everywhere. So I started cleaning it up a little bit. Once I was finished I stood looking att he area for awhile and suddenly it felt like several pairs of hands were touching me. Next time I'm there I plan on taking pictures to see if I find anything.

Lisa says:June 19, 2006, 6:02 pm

Dude! The hands touching you…Creepy! The light may be the aliens coming.

My Brother: Dude if i felt the hands i would like totally start screaming" TAKE ME TO YOUR MOTHERSHIP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"
BUT LIKE DUDE, THAT WOULD BE THE SECOND TIME IVE BEEN ABDUCTED.
PLEASE LEAVE A COMMENT REFERING TO ME.
i'M WATCHING YOU.
p.s. FOR YOUR SAKE CHECK THE CHILDREN
MUHHUHUHAHAHAHAAAA!

Nicole says:September 17, 2006, 8:35 pm

it’s true about this i lived right around the corner from this site for years and i used to see ppl walking on the roof and inside the building. and now there is a rest home there not a memorial.

patti linville says:October 28, 2006, 6:05 pm

your wrong about the memorial being gone. i live right there and its still there where the original school stood . then another was built next to it and torn down 2 or 3 years ago and i got a chance to go thru that building. just alot of orbs and a creepy feeling but nothing else.

Vinny says:December 21, 2006, 6:55 pm

the school used to be at E. 156th and Lucknow Avenue in the Collinwood neighborhood which is a pretty bad area. They tore it down in 1996-97 so this is either fake or defunct now.

theresa says:February 5, 2007, 7:12 pm

my mother used 2 live around there..thats scary!!

your mom says:February 18, 2007, 5:30 pm

This is crazy. I have never been there. I am balling. :]

Annie says:June 15, 2007, 2:53 pm

Wow I live Pretty Close but I’ve never been there. My House is really old but still there has been anything like that. I want to go! It would be so much fun. If I ever go these people will be the first to know!!!!

brooke says:July 9, 2007, 6:01 pm

Initially, it was believed that those killed were trapped by the building’s vestibule doors, which opened inward, not outward. Doors to the building were equipped with common door knob latches, not the more modern crash bar type latch. While panic leading to the crush of a large number of students in stairwell vestibules contributed to the death toll, students also died as a result of smoke inhalation and the fire itself. Some children died jumping from second and third story windows.172 students, two teachers and a rescuer were killed. Following the fire, the remains of the Lake View School were demolished and a memorial garden planned for the site. A new school, Collinwood Memorial Elementary School was built adjacent to the disaster site, and incorporated many features that had been lacking in the previous building. Unlike the building involved in the disaster, the new school incorporated fire safe stairwells, a central alarm system, and was built of steel framing and

other fire safe materials. Although the new school was torn down in 2004, a memorial plaque remains on the site as new development is added to the area.

Hope says:September 10, 2007, 12:46 am

Ilived in Cleveland in the late 60's and through the 70's. My daughter was in elementary school at the time. She was considered a gifted child and was sent to the school in question.
I visited the school on several occasions. Approaching the school grounds I felt an oppressive atmosphere. It was strange and not just a little disturbing.
This was, to be clear, the grounds of the school, not inside the school itself. Though there was an oppressive atomphere inside as well. Outside on the grounds of the school it was depressing and opressive.

hektik says:October 25, 2007, 5:08 am

story is true as i said my family grew up in cleveland, as i mentioned about in the franklin castle, yea, some of my family grew up on the eastide also ansel st. clair 55th fleet…..and this story is true, and yes the building is no longer there, there is a memorial and there is a new school nearby, not in the same location

Rick Foster says:May 25, 2008, 3:46 am

I knew a friend of mine who lived right next door to the parking lot behind the old school. She told me that when she moved in 3 years ago her young kids were afraid to go into the attic because of the little girl dressed in long white antique apparel. She also told me that one day while watching TV in her front room some nights the spirit girl would walk in front of the TV. They eventually got used to seeing her. She moved out this year. Incidentally tenants do not stay there long.
And that is true to quite a few houses around the school.

michelle says:October 6, 2008, 1:09 pm

Is that true??????

joe says:October 15, 2008, 8:04 pm

yah dude its true once i saw i cat its name was meowzer
weeee

my ******** is smeely rick foster cleaned it last night but whos gonna clean it no how about u michelle?

maddie says:January 19, 2009, 9:43 pm

I live in a house that is haunted. It is haunted. I live right down the street from Franklin castle on 44th. I got a ouija board for my b-day and we asked it questions. It told us that our ghost's name was Tim and he was murdered in 2008 by GWB. All I have to say of my ghost is that he is very nice and doesn't bother me or my family.

John Baker says:April 25, 2009, 12:22 am

Did you ever have the feeling of having someone "walk over your grave" when I found out about the school, first it was a post card from aout 1906 and I had this flash of what the entrance way inside looked like.I had this sudden rush of emotion. The memorial garden is still intact, the new school built recently sits on the site of the old collinwood memorial school which was built on land adjacent to the original school. The garden "is" on top of the old school. obviously there were parents, who wondered who among the 19 were possibly their children. Why didn't the parents of children missing in the fire claim the bodies as a group? Why did the old memorial school sit abandoned for so long? do students, teachers and visitors of the new school have strange experiences there? are there lights and screams in the new school at night? All questions some one will answer in the next few years.

R.M. Wood says:November 29, 2009, 9:52 pm

The story of the Collinwood School fire has haunted me since I first read about it 33 years ago when I was ten. I was always afraid something like this would happen to my school. I grew up in Salem, Massachusetts, where most of the school building were old and not always up to code.

To read about another haunting experience, check out my new novel '82 Mystery at http://www.82Mystery.com. You can get paid to read this intriquing, Mystery/Suspence thriller.

somarinna says:December 23, 2009, 11:24 am

my social studies teacher told us this story one day. We were going to have a fire drill and this was kind of her way to tell us to behave because you'll never know if it was a real one. She got alot into detail. Everyone was pushing and shoving amd screaming, that noone heard the instructions to get into a line so since the doors opened inward, noone could get out. When parents heard the school was on fire, they came rushing to the scene, and one girl was first and she gave up on trying to open the door because the people behind her kept pushing her and they were too strong. But when her mother came, her mother could not open the door, so her and her mother just looked at eachother through the glass and cried. They touched eachothers hand through little openings under the doorway and said i love you for the last time…

R.M. Wood says:January 2, 2010, 3:42 pm

This is interesting. I thought the outside doors opened out, but the vestibule doors, where everybody was trapped, opened inward. In any event, I guess none of the doors had a crash bar, they just had a knob.
Check out my thrilling new novel, ’82 Mystery at 82Mystery.com.

Crystal Nika says:January 20, 2010, 9:45 pm

I’ve lived being contacted by spirits my entire life untill i turned 12. Then i met this friend of my borthers friends girlfriend and she taught me how to use white magic. Which to me was bad, and i didn’t know anything about that! I always beleived in God and always went to church i stopped attending bcuz of the group i began to hang out with me, including my cousin and brother, started making fun of me. Anyways i began feeling the spirits then and seeing them and they followed me everywhere. I thoght i was going crazy! One night about 2:30 a.m. i woke up to use the bathroom and i see my mother sitting in the kitchen on a chair in the dark, i thoght nothing of it and went to pee. when i got out she wasnt there so i was like, what on Earth she usually tells me “Hey, Crystal!, don’t forget to turn out the light im goin to bed.” so i went to ask her what she was doin up so late and she says “Crystal, what are you talking about i was sleeping you just woke me up?, go to bed well talk tomorro.” so i did. I couldnt fall asleep for about an hour but i felt something cold only on my feet and i covered my head and went to bed. The next day we did talk and i told her and my dad what i was doing, witch craft, ouiji board, tarot cards all of that. They told me to stop and i did and a whole bunch of things happened then one niht i finally got tired of all the things happening to me i began crying i told the girl to leave me alone because nothing was happening or working for her only and just to me. I got on my knees and began to pray to Jesus and God, and asked them for help. The nexy day, was a saturday, and two ladies came to my porch and knocked on my door, they were from a church trying to get ppl to go. my father always told the to f*** off or something bad like this, but this time he told them to hold on a second, he came and got me and i began speaking to the women and the told what to do, which was burn everything or throw it in a garbage as far away from me as possible and i did and after three days everything stopped. Sometimes when spirits want to communicate with me and i feel them in an area where i am at, i just ignore them. I know how bad opening a door to the other side can be, God bless us all. Crystal 18-f, OH

ellie says:July 9, 2010, 11:24 am

does anyone actually still live in collinwood? come on people, get your facts straight.

Mic says:August 17, 2010, 9:41 pm

I grew up in Collinwood and attended Memorial School in the late 70’s, the school was closed due to forced busing in 1979. I remember walking past the memorial to the students and teachers that passed in the Collinwood School fire on my way home everyday. The Memorial School I attended was one of the last great pieces of architecture. It was beautiful on the inside and the auditorium was unforgettable. Once the school closed, it was sad to see it literally rot away. It’s now replaced

with a new, much smaller school. When I was 15, I worked in a nearby nursing home and took care of residents that survived the fire and it was amazing the detail they remembered about that day. I really miss the old neighborhood and it's unfortunate that due to declining safety of the neighborhood, many have moved out. My mother-in-law still lives across from the school and I will say it still brings eerie mixed feelings of lives that passed and school yard memories.

Mari 29 says:October 25, 2010, 5:18 pm

I moved on lucknow in 2005 directly across the street from the newly built school Memorial, and i had a few strange experiences there, from lights switches clicking off as in being up and physically clicking down to waking up in the middle of the night in the dead winter to find my window open wide from the inside of the apt, and my bathroom filled with snow, to also hearing whiney crying noises outside of my window at night. so I do believe that their is some form of strange activity going on on that street.

Roman says:October 28, 2010, 3:57 pm

I went to school there in the late 60's , for Vinny the school is and alway has been at 152nd St. and St. claire ave. The school did not burn down to the ground but the first floor was gutted !!!!!!! And by the way all them people did die there and that is why all schools in the countrys doors open out and can not be locked at all school hours !!!!

RIcky says:February 20, 2011, 4:42 am

I grew up in Bedford a suburb of Cleveland. When I was about ten I learned about the Collinwood School Fire. I became obsessed with it. I had researched it and learned as much as I possibly could about it. Trying to find out what actually caused the fire. I also tried to put together the timing of the whole event and how so quickly so many died within feet of safety. I was obsessed with trying to understand why more children were not able to be pulled from the heap at the front doors. I looked up the front page of the Cleveland Plain Dealer on March 5th 1908. I did scaled drawings of the building and floor plans with exits. I used to have my parents drive me to the memorial garden on March 4th. Then when I got older I would drive my self there. People thought I was nuts. When I got older I had a friend who's grandmothers sister died in the fire. I just about chopped down their family tree to find out information on that day. Doing research I have also learned that it was probably not true that the doors opened inward but that one of the very front doors was fastened shut with a spring as well as the rear doors. I am now 38 years old I now live in South West Florida and sometimes when I go visit my family and friends in Cleveland, Ill make a detour to the site. I guess at the time I was ten I realized the scale of the tragedy and that it that could actually happen at my school. When I would go to the memorial garden I used to try to stand in the very spot where most of the struggle for life happened. When you do. you can feel the unsettled souls still in limbo to this day. On every March 4th I look at the clock a little after 9am an imagine how little time it took to change so many lives. in that little slice of history.

Teresa L. says:November 10, 2011, 3:58 pm

I actually went to Memorial School from from 1973 to 1979, when it closed. I never experienced anything “supernatural” in all those years. It was a huge school! The main hallways on the first, second and third floor were about 20 feet wide! Afterschool, when everyone went home, it was kind of “empty building creepy,” but nothing more than that. The memorial to the Collinwood School is pretty small in my opinion. For awhile, it wasn’t kept up. When Memorial School was torn down in the mid 2000s, the new school was built on the exact same site, just to be clear. It pains me to think of the empty Memorial School full of garbage inside and out, but it was. I really miss it.

Terri Hirling says:November 14, 2011, 2:43 pm

I attended Memorial Elementary School from 1959 (1st grade) to 1964 (mid-semester 4th grade). As a child I was in awe of how big the building was and how old but beautiful it was inside. Even after visiting the site some years back after it closed, before it was demolished, it still seemed big even through my adult eyes. It was sad to see it sitting empty. I agree with the person who posted how unforgettable the auditorium was. It was like an old movie theater. I remember thinking that the halls were like a maze. The gym was located in the basement and felt like you were going into the bowels of the building, it seemed like a â??caveâ?. I believe there was a pool area, but my memory may be faulty on that. I do remember, however, that there was a girlsâ?? locker room which was always locked. We were not allowed to run through memorial garden. Again, my memory is hazy but I believe there was facility that patrolled the gardens in the morning, at lunchtime (when we left the premises because there was no cafeteria) and after school. Additionally, the memorial garden then doesnâ??t look anything like it does today due to rededication/remodeled. Some years after Memorial closed my mother was able to purchase a desk and chair for me when the furniture was auctioned off. Unfortunately, it was lost before I could make arrangements to remove it from a storage unit my ex neglected to pay for after we divorced.

Lynn Berk says:July 14, 2012, 4:16 pm

About the only thing you have correct is that there was a fire. Who checks your facts? The information about the doors is incorrect and was debunked almost immediately after the fire; and there is no “state memorial” on the spot. Shame on you. This is such a horrific story it needs no embellishment, let alone just plain wrong info.

hj says:March 23, 2013, 4:14 pm

my brother lived next door to the school, its all true and more, you have no idea how bad it is

Camryn says:May 24, 2014, 7:22 pm

My friend, Diamond, told me about this. She attended the school that was built over it. She said she didn’t find out about this until Memorial day all the teachers gathered around and told the students. I didn’t believe her until now that I googled it.

EB says:June 16, 2016, 7:29 pm

FYI a few facts:

1) The doors of Lakeview School DID open outwards. There were many other problems that day that added to the horror, but the doors opened OUT.

2) “Memorial 2″ was built on the same area “Memorial 1″ was.

3) There is still a Memorial Garden, a smaller one built much later.

4) There is a Ohio State Historical Marker for the site, which is currently in storage awaiting re-installation.

5) Collinwood itself is an up-&-coming neighborhood these days – come visit!!!

Please use correct grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Let's try to keep this place looking classy.
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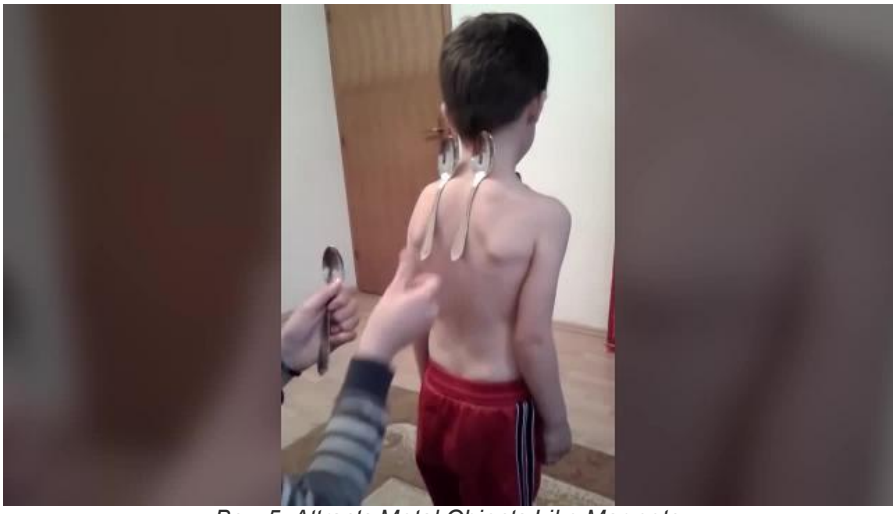
The Dumb Network LLC

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Boy, 5, attracts metal objects just like X-Men's Magneto and doctors are baffled

11:06, 24 Oct 2016 Updated 11:11, 24 Oct 2016 By Rachel Bishop

mirror.co.uk



Boy, 5, Attracts Metal Objects Like Magneto

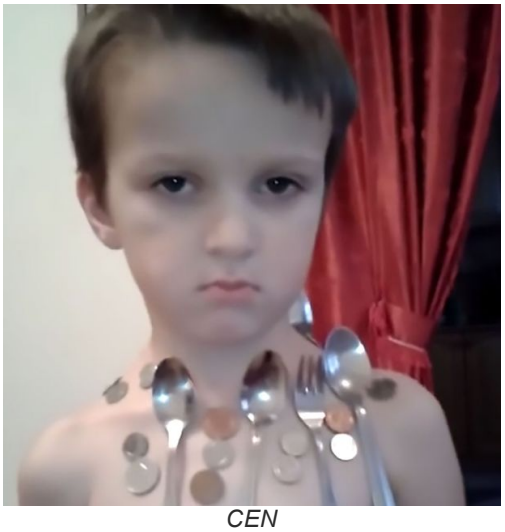
Doctors have been left baffled by a five-year-old boy who can stick metal objects to his skin - just like X-Men's Magneto.

Erman Delic's parents are mystified after noticing their young boy's unusual talent as a human magnet .

Incredible footage shows cutlery appearing to be attracted to the youngster - as he manages to stick three spoons, one fork and 13 coins to his chest, with more still attached to his back.

Erman's family, from Malesic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, took him to a doctor to make sure that nothing is wrong after they spotted him sticking the object to himself while watching television.

But medics were unable to explain his bizarre condition and were left baffled what was causing it.



CEN

The boy has been compared to Marvel Comics baddie Magneto, who is a fictional mutant subspecies of human born with the ability to generate and control magnetic fields

The boy has been compared to Marvel Comics baddie Magneto, who is a fictional mutant subspecies of human born with the ability to generate and control magnetic fields.

The footage of Erman comes just months after nine-year-old Mehmet Sumbul, from Turkey, was filmed attracting metal spoons and forks on his chest and back.

The youngster told local media at the time that his body can also do the same trick with screws, metal ashtrays as well as mobile phones.

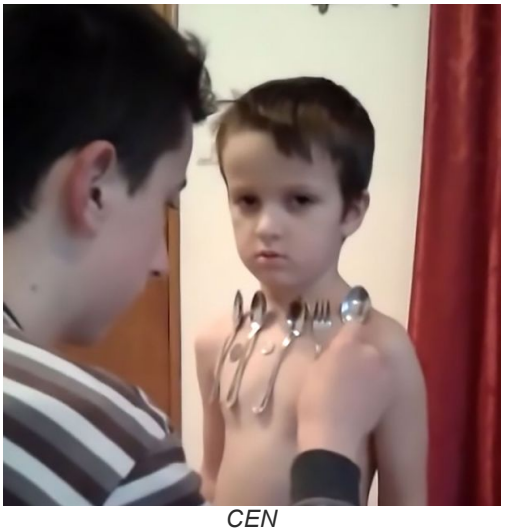
Mehmet, who lives in the city of Antalya, said: "I am seen as a strange person.

"When I'm angry, my magnetic field becomes stronger.

"Now I have a fork and a spoon on my body, I feel like a magnet."

His dad Huseyin added: "He can attract any type of small kitchenware.

"I haven't taken him to the hospital because he has no health issues.



CEN

"He is doing well at school and is good at sports too."

Two years ago, a Russian schoolboy, who was almost killed when knocked out by a massive electric shock, said he had been left with magnetic powers.



CEN

Mehmet Sumbul, 9, has claimed he has a body like a magnet

Nikolai Kryaglyachenko, 12, was walking home from school when he lent against a lamp post that was live from a faulty wire and was blasted across the pavement.

The phenomenon is sometimes referred to as ‘human magnetism’ and some have said they can also attract other types of materials, such as glass, porcelain, wood or plastic.

Many mainstream scientists however believe that it is in fact nothing more than unusually greasy skin.

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Real-life angry birds: Town tries to rein in rowdy turkeys

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press October 27, 2016

DAVIS, Calif. (AP) — Leaders of a California college town are working to relocate turkeys that have been harassing people on the streets.

The Sacramento Bee reports (http://bit.ly/2eeuM4l) that the Davis City Council voted this week to approve a wild turkey management plan that includes trapping and relocating many of the birds and possibly killing some of the more aggressive ones. It also called for an ordinance prohibiting people from feeding the turkeys.

Davis residents are fond of urban wildlife. They built a tunnel for toads and protected jackrabbits from construction, but the well-known turkeys wandering the streets are too much.

Police Chief Darren Pytel says his department has fielded calls from people accosted by turkeys, including a man who was pinned against the wall of a bank by a bird.

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Information from: The Sacramento Bee, http://www.sacbee.com

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The real-life disease that spread the vampire myth

By Stephen Dowling 31 October 2016

bbc.com

BBC

Vampires are some of the most enduring monsters we have created. Diseases that plagued our ancestors played a part in their creation.



(Credit: Getty Images)

Diseases were frightening things before the age of medical science. Plagues and epidemics could appear without warning and cause death and misery.

It wasn't just plagues. Other diseases – perhaps passed on by animals or from genes lying dormant in their own bodies – could cause ailments that defied explanation.

People turned instead to the supernatural. Some of these diseases helped spawn one of the most enduring and widespread monster myths in civilisation – the vampire.



(Credit: Getty Images)

Without sophisticated medical knowledge, it was easier to blame some maladies on fanged killers like Dracula (Credit: Getty Images)

The vampire – an undead figure who rises each night from his unquiet grave to feast on the blood of the living – has appeared since the time of the Ancient Greeks. While some of the sage old philosophers we still admire today might have lived into their 70s, life expectancy in Ancient Greece was thought to be around 28; centuries before sanitation, refrigeration and antibiotics, diseases were more prevalent and were far more likely to take people to an early grave.

But without a microscope to study these tiny assailants, communities in older times saw the hand of the supernatural in many diseases. Take porphyria, for instance, which affects heme, the chemical compound which helps make up the haemoglobin found in our blood. The patients suffer itching, rashes and blisters every time their skin is exposed to sunlight. In the very worst – and thankfully, very rare – cases, the gums recede from the teeth, making them appear far more prominent. Their bodily waste takes on a purple hue, like that of undigested blood. And the effects of sensitivity to light can be so severe that sufferers lose their ears and noses – a physiognomy echoed in the looks of vampires such as Nosferatu.

It is from eastern European regions such as Transylvania that the vampire myth spread westwards

Most of its sufferers will show far less drastic symptoms than those described. Desiree Lyon Howe of the American Porphyria Foundation says there are probably no more than a few hundred of these severe cases in the entire world at any one time. But their incidence may have been greater in remote communities in medieval times, ones which had less frequent contact with the outside world, and a less varied gene pool. The rural hamlets and farming villages in Transylvania, now part of Romania, fit this bill. And it is from eastern European regions such as Transylvania that the vampire myth spread westwards.

Author Roger Luckhurst, who edited Oxford World's Classic's reprint of Bram Stoker's Dracula, has researched the conditions which spread the belief in vampires, showing that the myth began to gain popularity in the early 18th Century. "The first mention of the word vampire in the English language is in the 1730s, in newspapers which carry reports from the edge of Europe, of bodies being dug up and looking bloated, and having fresh blood around their mouths. They report that these stories have come from peasants, but they make them sound very plausible."



(Credit: Science Photo Library)

Bites from infected animals could turn a person rabid (Credit: Science Photo Library)

When calamity struck these rural areas – plague, cattle dying – many would point the finger at an undead spirit preying on the living. Often the first act would be to dig up the last person who had died in the village. And that leads us to another problem – medical science was in such infancy, that even telling if a person had died wasn't exactly foolproof. Diseases such as catalepsy, which put people into a catatonic state so deep that their pulse was hard to detect, meant some were buried alive. If they awoke, some were driven so mad with fear and hunger that they would bite themselves – an explanation, perhaps, for some of the corpses found with fresh blood.

> There is a degree of folk wisdom in the werewolf myth, a warning for people not to connect yourself too much to the natural world – Roger Luckhurst, author

Most people in these communities kept animals; the villages themselves were usually close to forests and woodlands home to many other animals. Before vaccination was discovered, rabies, now virtually unknown in the European wild, was common. Once symptoms – which include aversion to light and water, aggression, biting and delirium – developed, death was inevitable. There is no cure.

"Rabies is obviously where we get the link to the werewolf, too," says Luckhurst. "People were turned feral by this contact with animals. There is a degree of folk wisdom in the werewolf myth, a warning for people not to connect yourself too much to the natural world. You had to remember your humanity."

Rural Transylvania was a perfect breeding ground for the vampire myth (Credit: Alamy)

The isolation of many of these communities, far away from the civilised avenues of Paris and London, may have contributed in other ways. "There used to be a lack of variety in the diet in these places, especially in mountainous areas, and people would commonly suffer from things like goitre [caused by iodine deficiency]," says Luckhurst. A lack of nutrients would not only have made people more susceptible to disease, but in some cases may have exacerbated the effects of some conditions hidden in their genes.

"And the way these vampire stories work for the 18th Century people living in London and Paris and reading these stories in their papers, is that it tells a good story about how civilised and advanced we are, and look these superstitious Catholic peasants who lived on the boundary of Europe."

> There are many cultures around the world – in different continents and at different times – that share the myth of the bloodsucking undead



(Credit: Alamy)

Interestingly, however, there are many cultures around the world – in different continents and at different times – that share the myth of the bloodsucking undead. There are manananggal in the Philippines, and the peuchen of Chile; the Baobhan Sith of Scotland and the Yara-ma-yha-who of indigenous Australian tribes.

Essentially, the vampire myth comes from more than just disease, says Luckhurst. The vampire always seems to come from somewhere outside of the comforts of our own homes – be that a rural Transylvanian cottage, an English stately home or Ancient Athens.

“It always comes from somewhere else; in Ancient Greece the barbarians from beyond the Greek world were cannibals and bloodsuckers, and able to do all sorts of black magic that they were weren’t. In other places, it was the pagan tribes.” Even in South America, he says, the vampiric creatures the Incas believed in were from the wilds beyond their cities.

The vampire seems to be a vehicle not just for the diseases that we were not able to comprehend, but for all those strange, unmapped places and the people that live in them too.

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Real-life Mowgli: Three-year-old boy survives for THREE days ALONE in Siberian forest

express.co.uk

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A THREE-year-old boy survived alone for three nights lost in the Siberian forest, surviving freezing temperatures and the threat of dangerous beasts.

By Charlie Buckle
PUBLISHED: 11:32, Fri, Sep 23, 2016 | UPDATED: 11:39, Fri, Sep 23, 2016



Siberian Times

Three-year-old, Tserin Dopchut survived in freezing temperatures in a forest inundated with wolves, bears and dangerous rivers.

He was discovered three days after getting lost, unharmed by emergency officials.

The young boy survived by eating his own supply of chocolate, and his good sense finding a dry makeshift bed under a larch tree.

The head of Tuva Republic, Sholban Kara-Ool, announced the news: "Hurray! Little Tserin has been found alive!

"We discovered him earlier this morning after a search in the taiga some 3 kilometres from the village of Khut."

Search teams had combed the area where the boy disappeared after family members told authorities he was playing with dogs near his home in the forests of Piy-Khemsky district.

According to the Siberian Times, family members believed he may have followed a young puppy into the woodland despite the watchful eye of his great grandmother - who was in charge of him when he was lost.

More than 100 people including Russian Emergency Ministry's rescuers, police, volunteers, as well as close and distant family members joined the frantic hunt. A helicopter over flew a search area of some 120 square km.

Regional emergencies' chief Ayas Saryglar said: "Of course, the situation was very dangerous. The River Mynas is fast and cold. If a small child fell in, it would be certain death.

"There are wolves, and bears in the forest. The bears are now fattening for the winter. They can attack anything that moves. In addition, it is warm during the day, but at night there are even frosts. If we consider that the kid disappeared during the day, he was not properly dressed - only a shirt and shoes, no coat."

Regional head Sholban Kara-Ool explained: "He recognised his uncle's voice calling his name, and called back. Once his uncle hugged him, the little boy asked if his toy car was okay. He said that he had some chocolate which he ate during the first day.

"Then he found a dry place under a larch tree and slept there between the roots. The whole village is throwing a party to celebrate his survival. He was given the second name of Mowgli.

"It is now predicted he will become a rescuer himself, because he showed incredible stamina for his age by surviving for so long alone in these cold woods."

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'Red Clogs' a Coalminer's Ghost

Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history
Posted on July 20, 2016 by LancashireFolk



Red_Lancashire_clogs_(side_view)

Recently, whilst researching for *Manchester Folk,* I came across an intriguing mention of a ghost known as Red Clogs. No detail was given but with a little research, I discovered that he wasn't called that because he wore red clogs – although his clogs were indeed red. Red with blood.

The story, brief though it is, says that a poor collier lost his life when working with a mechanical coal-washing hopper, which would wash soil and rock away from the coal and then crush it into chunks using rotating blades at the bottom of the machine. The collier leaned in to clear away an obstruction and fell. His feet were badly mutilated and so, naturally enough, his ghost was always said to be wearing blood-soaked clogs.

Most versions of this tale say that it occurred at Alexandra Pit at Whelley, near Wigan. Miners soon learned to blame any strange occurrence below ground on Red Clogs, and above ground his ghost is said to haunt the area known as Whelley Plantations.

However, Red Clogs is also claimed by Pidgeon Pit, close to Alexandra, Blundell's pit at Pemberton, Bryn Pit, a pit at New Springs and by Taylor Pit in Wigan where it was said he was hit by a landslide. His ghost has also been reported in Foundry Lane, Pemberton, where the remains of several mine-workings still lie.

Further afield, in Merseyside, Red Clogs is said to haunt an old pit in Haydock, at Sutton Manor colliery and also Garswood colliery, where the collier is said to have either been 'chopped up' by machinery or simply fallen down a lift shaft.

As I continued to dig for information, I found that the ghost of Red Clogs is also said to haunt the brickworks on Walthew House Lane near Kitt Green, where the red clogs are explained as being stained with brick dust. At Marsh Green, children were discouraged from playing in the old clay pits at the redundant brickworks by stories of Red Clogs. At yet another brickworks (unnamed), the story says that the man died in an accident involving a conveyor belt and night-workers reported seeing his red clogs walking along the belt.

And in Lancashire, Victory Park football ground in Chorley is said to be haunted by the ghost of a workman who died whilst erecting the floodlights. His injuries caused blood-loss – and some of the blood stained his clogs. His name was Johnny, so of course he became known as Johnny Red Clogs. I think it's likely that he was so named after the more well-known pit ghost.

Another, less gory story explains the Red Clogs in this manner… a young Pemberton boy was given some new clogs by his mother but was unwilling to wear them because they were not the usual black leather but red. His fears were realised when his school-friends taunted him about his pretty red shoes but when he complained to his mother she gave him no sympathy. Clogs were the chosen footwear of the poor because their wooden soles did not wear out; the iron patches on the bottom of the shoes could easily be replaced when they became too thin. And as the boy's mother

was indeed poor, she simply could not afford to buy more clogs for her son; he would simply have to wear them. The boy suffered constant bullying until at last he could bear no more and took his own life in Porter's Wood. He was found by other children, coming home through the wood at the end of the school day.

I can imagine that children were undoubtedly entranced by this story, with which they could identify, especially if they were playing in Porter's Wood. As time went on and the tale was retold by these children, it once again changed detail and location – Red Clogs was said to haunt a certain bridge in Aspull and children warned each other never to go under the bridge after dark… and more than one grown-up in Wigan remembers believing that Red Cloggs was a ghost who haunted the cellar of Dolly Gray's sweet shop on Platt Lane!

This is a fascinating example of how a story, which may really be based on a horrible fact (the nasty death of a coal-miner) can morph into a ghost story and, as time passes, turn into an urban legend to rival any I have come across. It has travelled from the Greater Manchester area north to Lancashire and west to Merseyside. Where else does Red Clogs haunt? Let me know!

Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history - author of 'Lancashire Folk' published by Schiffer Publishing Winter 2015 - 9780764349836 £17.50. 'Manchester Folk', covering Greater Manchester, coming in 2017!

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Archaeologists Reenact 19th-Century Mummy Ritual | BU Today | Boston University

By Amy Laskowski

bu.edu

Halloween-centric ceremony at the Castle



In the late 1800s, the hottest ticket in town would get you into an event where an Egyptologist and a doctor crouched over a 3,000-year-old mummy and slowly unwrapped its bandages “for scientific purposes.” In the spirit of Halloween, and with a more than seasonal interest in archaeology, about 70 students and guests gathered Thursday night at the Castle to do the same thing at a sold-out event called Unrolling Egyptomania.

The mummy wasn’t real (today mummy unwrapping is considered unethical and destructive for both moral and scientific reasons), and everyone had a part to play. Women wore corsets and fascinators (head pieces), and men sported tuxedos and gloves, while the Castle’s chandeliers and Oriental rugs completed the 19th-century tableau.

The student-run event was produced in collaboration with the Greater Boston Vintage Society, with help from BU archaeology department staff. Earlier in the day, the students had invited local elementary school children to the Castle to see some of the artifacts that would be on display that evening, such as the mummy, Egyptian art, and other items borrowed from BU’s Gabel Museum of Archaeology.

Event director Ilaria Patania (GRS’17), a PhD candidate in archaeology, said unveiling parties were very fashionable occasions, hosted by those who could afford to buy a mummy as “entertainment for their house party,” and also by professors or hospitals, who would examine the relic in the name of science. The macabre unwrappings often did serious damage to the mummy’s body, and newspaper articles reported women fainting and men having to leave the room. By the 19th century, it became illegal to export mummies from Egypt, and Patania said dealers started to disassemble the mummies to smuggle them out of the country, leaving a lot of western collections with body pieces like heads, hands, or feet.

At 8 p.m., the group gathered in the Castle’s elegant music room, where a four-foot-long mummy wrapped in bandages awaited them beside an assemblage of tools, including scissors, tweezers, pliers, and a hammer. Playing the part of the Egyptologist was real-life archaeologist and art historian Ava Forte Vitali, Egyptologist-in-Residence at the Morbid Anatomy Museum in Brooklyn, N.Y.



Vitali related the backstory of the mummy, a prince called Khaemwaset (KAW-em-was-it) of the 19th Dynasty, known to us from the mythological stories of Greco-Roman Egypt as the magician Naneferkaptah. The mummy had been lost, she said, then found, then lost again, and after the unveiling, would be donated to Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts for further study.

“People started doing this for spectacle, to gawk at,” Vitali told the crowd. “But in this modern era of archaeology, we now believe archaeology should be done scientifically. We should understand the principles behind it.” As she talked, a doctor, played by Jade Luiz (GRS’17), snipped away at the mummy’s outer shroud. (To create the mummy, the team had gathered a fake skeleton, bandages cut from cloth, and gel stain to give it an aged appearance.)

Luiz remarked on a strange fragrance, and Vitali explained that Egyptians used incense, resins, and natron, a type of salt, in the mummification process. “The teeth are well kept,” ersatz doctor Luiz said, as she examined the mummy’s head. “They’re a little worn in the back, which tells me the person was around 50 or 60. This means he was probably eating a diet of more refined grains.”

Vitali explained that in an actual mummification, Egyptians would remove the lungs, liver, intestines, and stomach, and preserve them in jars. The brain was discarded, and the heart was left in the body. If the mummy was male, he was often buried with an erection, she said, “because of the belief that you would be able to regenerate yourself if you went completely prepared to get the task done.”

She pointed to several amulets, some on the mummy’s eyes and others spread around the body. “Some of them were placed specifically, whereas others were the gods he worshipped,” she said. “Also across his body are a number of scarabs, dung beetles that were a symbol of rebirth, because they would roll around in their own feces and lay their eggs.”

As a modern archaeology student, Patania has learned to have great respect for ancient Egyptian ritual, something that was lacking at most 19th-century unveiling parties. “Anything not British was considered culturally unevolved,” she said. “Since Victorians were fascinated with death and the Orient, people didn’t see Egyptology as a real science; rather, it was something that was entertaining. That’s where mummy unwrappings come from. The Brits would never exhume their own grandmother, but they would say, ‘Well, my grandmother was British, and we’re civilized people.’”

Amy Laskowski

Amy Laskowski can be reached at amlaskow@bu.edu.

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Rescue cat saves owner's life by biting his toes during seizures

By christina capatides CBS News October 6, 2016, 11:13 AM

cbsnews.com



CBSN - Watch Live

Glen Schallman suffers from three separate brain diseases, the combination of which cause frequent seizures. He has been diagnosed with polymicrogyria and unilateral schizencephaly – which both involve malformations of the brain – and a type of brain tumor known as hypothalamic hamartoma. Obviously, seizures are always dangerous, but when they occur while a person is sleeping, they can interfere with breathing and quickly turn deadly.



Luckily for Glen, he now has a furry safeguard against that worst-case scenario.

Glen adopted Blake – his one-year-old black cat – from a PetSmart in Fort Worth, Texas. And though Blake has never received any formal training, he now acts as a bona fide therapy animal, biting Glen's toes to wake him up whenever a seizure occurs at night.

What's more, the cat has also reportedly developed the ability to sense when a seizure is about to come on.

Schallman is now believed to be the oldest living person with his rare combination of brain conditions, thanks in no small part to his loving companion Blake, whom he once rescued at an adoption event and is now rescuing him back on a daily basis.

CBS News

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0 Comments

A flaming miser and a top hat wearing beggar wander Prague at night

Old Town is quite crowded at night with a variety of headless ghosts, flaming ghosts, otherworldly animals and water sprites, if all the legends are taken at face value. Prague even has its share of skeletons who refuse to stay put.

Perhaps the most famous is the flaming skeleton of Karlova Street. When a great fire hit the area near Charles Bridge, all of the residents worked together to try to put it out or make sure that everyone made it out of the buildings and to safety at Old Town Square or the Bridge. There was one exception, though. A money lender put all of his gold coins into a sack and tried to make it out of the area with no regard for anyone else. The moneylender was not a popular person. He took advantage of people's misfortunes by charging high interest and, when they couldn't keep up payments, foreclosing on whatever property they had and selling it to the highest bidder.



Building detail on Karlova Street

Gold is rather heavy, at least according to experts. Most people only ever handle it in small quantities. If anyone has any extra, please give it to us so we can check its weight and verify this aspect of the legend.

The bag proved too much for the miser but he refused to put it down or even lighten it by throwing some coins away. People were too busy getting buckets of water from the river or saving babies from the flames to see exactly what happened to him after he set off from his home toward Charles Bridge. When the flames were finally put out and people returned to salvage what was left, nobody came to the money lender's house, which ironically was virtually untouched by the fire.

Some say he had a heart attack and died, others that the bag broke and he ran straight into the flames to get the rolling coins. Others still that the earth opened and swallowed him up or a building collapsed on him.

In any event, he realized too late that he would have been safer going in the other direction. From time to time, his flaming skeleton with fiery eyes and a sack of gold appears at night to strangers, begging for help to get to Old Town Square. If anyone would help him, he would be freed from his curse. But so far, nobody has offered to



Karlova Street

carry the flaming bag of gold for him. His appearances are infrequent, usually coming before a fire or flood affects the city.

Once the sightings began, a few people belatedly claimed to have seen him transform into a fiery skeleton and then be dragged away by the Devil himself, but none of these so-called witnesses were from the area. Tragedies always bring fame-seekers trying to insert themselves into a good story.


Gargoyle at the Karolinum

Old Town still has another famous restless skeleton. This one is a bit fancier than most others. Vincenc, who was two meters tall, was the servant to an elderly anatomy instructor named Dr. Spurný at Charles University. The professor longed to have such a fine and tall skeleton in the university collection and made Vincenc an offer for his lovely bones once he passed away. Vincenc thought for sure he would outlive the professor and took the offer, thinking he could keep his skeleton and the money — an astounding 30 gold coins, a fortune in the 18th century when the tale takes place.

The university had a large collection of skeletons of all kinds, but none was as fine as the tall and healthy servant Vincenc.


Door detail at the Karolinum

Dr. Spurný did not have to wait long to claim his prize. For those who think the master was going to resort to foul play to get at Vincenc's bones, you have guessed wrong. The tall servant was the author of his own demise. He never had much money at one time before, and took it out with him to celebrate. He drank far too much and bragged of his good fortune in one of the shadier pubs near the Karolinum, the main building of the university.

Robbers followed him into the street and stabbed him repeatedly, and took off with his money.

Dr. Spurný was pleased to see that none of the bones were damaged. He thought Vincenc a fool though, for wasting his good fortune so quickly. Instead of putting Vincenc's fine frame in a place of honor in the university collection, he dressed the skeleton up in a top hat and gave it an ebony walking stick with a gold grip. The skeleton was placed just inside the doorway of the professor's apartment as a grim joke.

From midnight to 1 am the skeleton can be seen begging for coins, holding out his top hat and leaning on his walking stick. He hopes to collect enough money to buy his skeleton back from the university so he can rest in peace. But he has made no progress as the few coins he gets always fall through his hands when he tries to



Seal of Charles University

count them.



Anenské náměstí with an artwork by David Černý

More skeletons, but boring unflaming ones without top hats and canes, can be found near the Theatre on the Balustrade at the square called Anenské náměstí. The area used to be a cemetery, and it was dug up with little respect for its residents. The skeletons wander at night in a large crowd looking for their home, which they will never find. Reports of sightings have been few recently, perhaps because people simply mistake them for another group of drunken tourists making noise in the night while they search for their hotel.

They — the skeletons, not the tourists — are not to be confused with another ghost on the same square, a church bell ringer who stole candles so he could sell them. He appears on occasion with flaming finger tips, as a warning against candle theft.



Alley next to Anenské náměstí.

Background

Karlova Street is one of the oldest in the city, leading from Charles Bridge to Old Town Square. It dates back to at least the 12th century. Charles Bridge was built in 1357, replacing the earlier Judith Bridge, which stood from 1172 until 1342. Old Town Square has been the main center of the city since the mid-1300s, though some building on the square are even older.

Prague has seen a number of fires, although the one in 1689 was one of the biggest. It burned a significant part of the city and created an opportunity to rebuild whole neighborhoods. Old Town can be seen in flames on The Tower, one of the Major Arcana cards in *The Tarot of Prague.* The image is from the 1648 sacking of Prague by the Swedish Army at the end of the the Thirty Years' War.

Charles University was founded in 1348 and its medical faculty is one of the oldest existing departments, and the oldest medical school in Central Europe. The Karolinum, one of its main buildings, is located at Ovocný trh, the same square that has the Estates Theatre, where Mozart conducted the premiere of *Don Giovanni.*

The school does indeed have a skeleton collection, and it is sometimes open to the public as part of the Museum of Human and Comparative Anatomy of the First Faculty of Medicine of Charles University. It has a rather bizarre array of deformed infant skeletons, death masks, mummies, exotic skeletons from primitive cultures and primate skeletons. None has a top hat or cane.

Anenské náměstí is near the former St. Anne's Church, which has long been deconsecrated. It was a church from 1316 to 1782. Most churches at the time had cemeteries in the surrounding yard, but as real estate started to command high prices, the cemeteries were moved to the suburbs. This explains why the Malá Strana Cemetery (Malostranský hřbitov) is in Prague 5, outside the former city walls and far from Malá Strana. It was established in 1680 during a plague to keep mass graves out of the populated area. Olšany Cemetery



Museum of Human and Comparative Anatomy

(Olšanské hřbitovy) in Prague 3 was also created in 1680 due to the same plague. Once the plague subsided, both continued to be used, and cemeteries in the city center were abolished.

The only significant cemetery left in Old Town and Malá Strana is the Old Jewish Cemetery. Several churches, though, still have tombs inside the church walls and in their crypts.

An article by Baba Studio with Raymond Johnston.
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Main image: Skull of a Skeleton with Burning Cigarette by Vincent van Gogh. Source: Wikimedia commons

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Rothwell charnel chapel: the nameless dead

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Exploring the Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project



A stack of disarticulated human remains in the charnel chapel at Rothwell. (Photo: Jenny Crangle)

Why were bones placed in charnel chapels, and just how common was this practice in medieval England? Work at Rothwell, Northamptonshire, is shining remarkable new light on the significance of these ossuaries. Elizabeth Craig-Atkins, Jennifer Crangle, and Dawn Hadley from the University of Sheffield explain the domain of the anonymous dead.

In the 1860s, Paul Cypher (the pen name of a local doctor and clergyman) published a dramatic account of the surprise discovery of the charnel chapel at Holy Trinity Church, Rothwell. Around 1700, a grave digger 'wielding his mattock… suddenly found himself precipitated into a dark abyss, and one might easily imagine his consternation when the dust had subsided, and his eyes grown accustomed to the darkness, at discovering himself in this awful assemblage of past generations'. The nightmarish experience of falling into a dark pit filled with human bones has since passed into local folklore. Whatever the truth of this story, or indeed the fate of the poor digger, it seems that the charnel chapel had been sealed up intact and remained untouched until its rediscovery. Thanks to this, the collection of human remains stored within holds great potential for piecing together the purpose of medieval charnel practices in England.

The Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project, based at the University of Sheffield, began with the doctoral research of team member Jennifer Crangle, who reviewed the number of charnel chapels constructed during the medieval period, the motivation behind their sudden appearance and proliferation, and their role within medieval funerary and liturgical practice. We have since focused our research on the chapel at Rothwell. This is one of only two sites in England where a medieval charnel chapel and its contents are preserved, creating a rare opportunity to understand why such ossuaries were established. Our findings are challenging much of the received wisdom about such repositories.

The charnel chapel is accessed via a staircase descending from a porch. (Photo: Jenny Crangle)

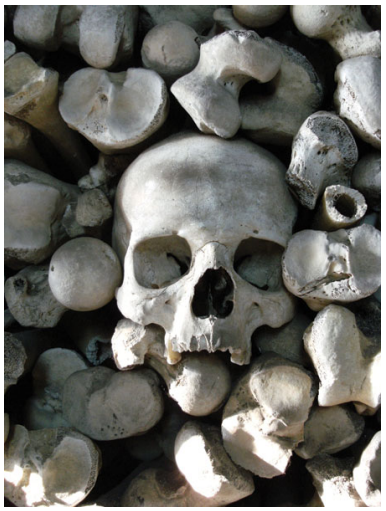
A rare survival

The room that prompted Paul Cypher's dramatic prose is a vaulted, semi-subterranean structure divided into two bays. It lies directly beneath the south aisle of Holy Trinity Church, which was constructed during the late 13th or early 14th century. As the south wall of the church aligns with that of the charnel chapel, it may also have been built at this time. There are faint traces of a painting on the east wall of the charnel chapel, which would have been illuminated by two windows (now blocked in) placed high on the south wall. Although too little remains of this image to identify its subject, other similar scenes in medieval churches depict the Resurrection.

The charnel chapel at Rothwell still houses a large group of disarticulated human bones. Currently, most of these are arranged into two substantial stacks located centrally within the room. Despite the movement and collapse of the piles in some areas, the bones remain in an orderly arrangement, with long bones stacked in



clear layers. A large number of crania have been arranged separately on shelving running along the two long walls of the chapel.



A skull within a stack of bones at the charnel chapel at St Leonard's Church, Hythe. (Photo: Jenny Crangle)

We are aware of only one other medieval charnel chapel in England that survives in a comparable state of completeness. It is at St Leonard's Church in Hythe in Kent. The Hythe and Rothwell chapels share similarities in their architecture and in the arrangement of the human remains within them. The room at Hythe is larger than that at Rothwell, but it is also partially underground and illuminated by windows.

Medieval charnel chapels

Understanding the nature and extent of medieval charnel practice in England is hindered by the poor survival of the chapels themselves and the even rarer survival of the human remains once housed within them. Knowledge of the number, nature, and dating of medieval charnel chapels has, by necessity, largely relied on documentary sources such as foundation records, churchwardens' accounts, and wills. Some comprehensive archaeological studies do exist, for example the work of Nicholas Orme and Roberta Gilchrist on Exeter and Norwich respectively, but these focus on freestanding chapels located in large, high-status ecclesiastical complexes – very different from the structure at Rothwell, which is sited beneath a parish church. The focus on documented sites has resulted in some broad generalisations about medieval charnel practice. It has been concluded that chapels were rare in England and that their role within medieval religious practice was inconsistent. It is also suggested that they were typically freestanding buildings, which tended to lie north or west of a church. As no such freestanding buildings are found at parish churches, it has been assumed that the form of their charnel chapels is largely unknown.

Our research is allowing us to challenge many of these generalisations. Surveying the documentary and archaeological evidence has identified over 50 potential medieval charnel chapel sites dating from the 13th to 15th centuries, which are located in cathedral and abbey complexes, parish churches, and hospitals across England. This contradicts the suggestion that charnelling was rare in medieval England. It is also apparent that charnel chapels could take two forms – the freestanding buildings recognised in previous research and subterranean rooms as found at Rothwell. Both types of charnel chapel were constructed from the 13th century, located below ecclesiastic buildings, and intended to house human remains. They also share permanent staircases to facilitate access, windows to provide light, and other features including wall paintings, basins for holy water, and niches, presumably for candles or statues.

Modern study of the human remains at Rothwell is providing major new insights into medieval charnel practices in England. (Photo: Courtesy of the Rothwell Charnel Chapel Project)

New opportunities

The surviving skeletal material at Rothwell provides a way to explore the role and character of charnel practice, which will form the focus of the next stages of our research project. Although the chapel may have been built at around the same time as the rebuilding of the south wall of the church in the late 13th or early 14th century, it does not follow that this was when the charnel was placed in the chapel. We have recently undertaken a programme of radiocarbon dating of the bones, providing an independent scientific basis for the chronology of charnelling for the first time in England. Five samples were selected for radiocarbon dating. These included one skull (Sample 4) with a distinctive cut to its top, suggestive of anatomical dissection. The dates we obtained,



along with a short description of the unique features of each individual sample, are presented in the table.

The wide range of dates for the skeletal material, which span the late 13th century to the 19th century, is particularly notable. These confirm that no single catastrophic event killed the individuals whose remains reside in the charnel chapel. It also seems very unlikely that the ossuary was constructed to house a backlog of disturbed charnel from the local cemetery. In this scenario, the bones would pre-date the construction of the chapel itself, but none of our dates are demonstrably earlier than the chapel. Instead, there is evidence for the placement of material in the charnel chapel throughout the medieval period and also, more surprisingly, during the late 17th to 19th centuries. In the case of the skeleton with evidence for anatomisation, the late date fits with the nature of the cut: this sort of procedure was not conducted on medieval corpses, but is documented in skeletal collections of post-medieval and modern date. Sample 5 also returned a late date, and these two crania were probably placed in the ossuary after the rediscovery of the site in the 18th century. This is long after the chapel supposedly went out of use, raising new questions about how the site was perceived, and even used, during later periods.

This is an extract from a feature published in *CA* 321. Read on in the magazine. Click here to subscribe.

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Feet of clay: 'foreign forces' row over China's Terracotta Warriors

yahoo.com

October 27, 2016



<img alt="The Terracotta Army in Xian is at the centre of a bitter row, with patriots and scholars dismissing as impossible theories they could have been inspired by Greek sculpture" class="StretchedBox W(100%) H(100%) ie-7_H(a)" src="https://s.yimg.com/ny/api/res/1.2/qs55Vy62g4KKplTozXRxbQ--/YXBwaWQ9aGlnaGxhbmRlcjtzbT0xO3c9ODAw/http://media.zenfs.com/en_us/

The Terracotta Army in Xian is at the centre of a bitter row, with patriots and scholars dismissing as impossible theories they could have been inspired by Greek sculpture (AFP Photo/)

Silent and enigmatic, China's emblematic Terracotta Warriors are at the centre of a bitter row, with patriots and scholars dismissing as impossible theories they could have been inspired by Greek sculpture.

The 8,000-man clay army, crafted around 250 BC for the tomb of China's first emperor Qin Shihuang, is a UNESCO world heritage site, a major tourist draw and a symbol of ancient Chinese artistic and military sophistication in a country that proclaims itself a 5,000-year-old civilisation.

Questioning their origins touches on deep sensitivities, as many take pride in China's early discovery of world-changing inventions, from gunpowder to the compass and movable type.

At the same time its history with the West is fraught with a sense of humiliation over the colonies and concessions established in the 19th century.

But theories put forward by art historian Lukas Nickel of the University of Vienna – and trumpeted in a recent documentary by National Geographic and the BBC – claim that Greek innovations in artistic naturalism, and perhaps even Greek artisans themselves, directly influenced the sculptures.

After the documentary aired earlier this month, netizens blasted the BBC and questioned how the Greeks could have impacted ancient China.

"Couldn't it be that Chinese people went first to Greece and influenced their sculpture?" one wrote.

At the tomb tourists from across China crammed observation platforms to view the ranks of soldiers, jostling for space to snap selfies against their serious, stony facades as guides briskly narrated the story of their discovery by farmers in the 1970s.

Several visitors were incredulous at theories of foreign influence. Dong Shenghua of Beijing said this was "impossible", pointing to the Asian features of the statues and the sophistication of the craftsmanship, which is "so good we can't even make them today".

"We have 5,000 years of history, how many does England have?" he asked.

Ma Dongling, from Guangxi, said inspiration could not have come from abroad as China was "very innovative" at the time. "The emperor was the first in the world to do this."

The museum's lead archaeologist Zhang Weixing was similarly dismissive, saying the materials, technology, and ceramics techniques used for the Warriors were all Chinese.

"To say that the Qin tombs and ancient Greece had contact has no substantial evidence at all," he told AFP. "It merely exists in the scholar's conjecture."

As emperor, he added, Qin Shihuang "not only innovated the terracotta warriors, he also created a series of innovations" including standardised weights and measures, national roads, and a unified currency.

"Who influenced whom, it's tough to say. Ancient Greek sculpture had already also been influenced by Egypt."

- Scholarly gap -

For evidence Nickel points to historical records suggesting the first Qin emperor made casts of huge bronze statues seen in China's far west, realistic detailing of muscle and bone on some figures, and the absence of an extensive prior sculptural tradition in China.

Further research could show that foreign empires may have provided a model for the Qin state itself, he told AFP.

"I think it’s perfectly possible that there's much more influence in thought about statecraft, in how to run an empire, than people have been so far willing to admit."

He points to the rise of empires in central Asia before the Qin dynasty, with the Achaemenids in Persia followed by Alexander the Great and the Seleucids. "When I look at the map of Eurasia, what the Chinese do fits perfectly in the big picture."

But basing theories about transmission of cultural ideas on stylistic similarities in objects fails to convince some Chinese scholars, he acknowledged.

"This is an argument that works mainly in Europe and America," Nickel says. In China, researchers rely more on textual evidence for proof, he said, and so were "very hesitant to believe there were interactions before the mid 2nd century BC, when the Chinese emperor of the Han dynasty sent an envoy to central Asia".

And the idea of early Sino-Western exchanges threatens to undermine a cornerstone of Chinese identity: the Qin dynasty, while brutal in many respects, with book burnings and executions of literati, laid the foundation for China as a unified nation state that has persisted for two millennia.

"That is the moment when China is being made," said Nickel, acknowledging the sensitivity of his assertions.

"Saying there is such a link, it always brings up memories of colonialism, of Western domination of East Asia, which is totally understandable."

Zhang insisted the disagreement was based on academic rigour. "If he was an archaeologist we could discuss this issue," he said. "Archaeologists put more importance on historical documents and unearthed objects."

Li Xiuzhen, a fellow scholar at the museum, told AFP that while there may have been cultural contact, that did not imply influence and the warriors were completely Chinese.

"The terracotta army is unique in the world," she said, and the "creation of the Qin people".

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Russian city inaugurates statue to bloody Ivan the Terrible

yahoo.com

AP HOW AMO October 14, 2016



A monument to Czar Ivan the Terrible after it is unveiled in the city of Orel, 350 kilometers (225 miles) south of Moscow, in Orel, Russia, Friday, Oct. 14, 2016. Despite local protests and court battles, the Russian city of Orel has unveiled the country's first monument to the brutal Czar, Ivan the Terrible on horseback, wielding both a sword and a cross. (AP Photo/Howard Amos)

OREL, Russia (AP) — Despite protests and court battles, the Russian city of Orel has unveiled the country's first monument to Ivan the Terrible, the bloody 16th-century czar who massacred his subjects by the thousands and even reportedly killed his own son.

At a ceremony Friday, officials inaugurated the statue of Ivan on horseback, wielding both a sword and a cross, in the city (pronounced ahr-YOL) 350 kilometers (225 miles) south of Moscow. The region's governor likened the brutal czar — favorably — to current Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"We have a great, powerful president who has forced the whole world to respect and defer to Russia — just like Ivan the Terrible did in his time," Vadim Potomsky said at the ceremony.

Ivan, who reigned from 1547 to 1584, was responsible for violence including the Novgorod Massacre, which killed thousands. But he is also respected as both key to Russia's establishing itself as an empire and as a patron of the arts, including commissioning the landmark St. Basil's Cathedral, which dominates Red Square in Moscow.

The czar's moniker reflects his mixed reputation — in Russian, it can mean not only "terrible" but also "formidable."

The erection of the statue comes as Russia, encouraged by Putin, is undergoing a broad reassessment of its history. The current Russian narrative justifies violence and repression if it's seen as having been necessary to strengthen the Russian state, including atrocities ordered by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

Among the crowd of 1,000 who witnessed the monument's inauguration in Orel was Alexander Zaldostanov, the burly leader of the pro-Putin biker group Night Wolves.

On the other side of the political spectrum, some activists in Orel had held protests against the statue and launched an unsuccessful court attempt to block it. One of them, Natalia Golenkova, told The Associated Press she had been assaulted walking home one night and warned to stop her opposition to the statute.

"Who was a fan of Ivan the Terrible? Stalin," she said. "Tyrants love tyrants."

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Beth-Sarim - Watchtower House of Princes & BethShan

jwfacts.com

Facts About Jehovah's Witnesses

home > changed teachings > bethsarim

Beth-Sarim :: House of Princes

Despite the failures of 1914 and 1925, Rutherford continued stating that the earthly resurrection was about to happen. In 1929, he authorised the purchase of Beth-Sarim, a house for Abraham and other resurrected Princes to live in.



Bethsarim front



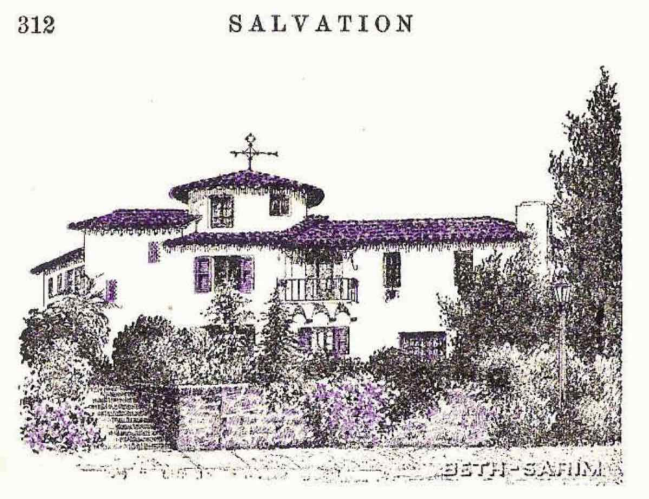
Bethsarim pool

Concerning Beth-Sarim, the book *Salvation* explains:

> "At San Diego, California, there is a small piece of land, on which, in the year 1929, there was built a house, which is called and known as Beth-Sarim. The Hebrew words Beth Sarim mean "House of the Princes"; and the purpose of acquiring that property and building the house was that there might be some tangible proof that there are those on earth today who fully believe God and Christ Jesus and in His kingdom, and who believe that the faithful men of old will soon be resurrected by the Lord, be back on earth, and take charge of the visible affairs of earth. The title to Beth-Sarim is vested in the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society in trust, to be used by the president of the Society and his assistants for the present, and thereafter to be forever at the disposal of the aforementioned princes on earth. . . . while the unbelievers have mocked concerning it and spoken contemptuously of it, yet it stands there as a testimony to Jehovah's name; and if and when the princes do return and some of them occupy the property, such will be a confirmation of the faith and hope that induced the building of Beth-Sarim." *Salvation* (1939) p.311

The *Golden Age* 1930 included a copy of the Beth-Sarim deed, showing who was expected to live in it.

> "Both the grantor and the grantee are fully persuaded from the Bible testimony which is the word of Jehovah God and from extraneous evidence that God's Kingdom is now in the course of establishment and that it will result beneficially for the peoples of earth; that the governing power and authority will be invisible to men but that the kingdom of God will have visible representatives on the earth who will have charge of the affairs of the nations under supervision of the invisible ruler, Christ. That among those who will be thus the faithful representatives and visible governors of the world will be David, who was once King over Israel; and Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jepthai, and


312 SALVATION
BETH-SARIM

Beth-Sarim Salvation 1931 page 312

Joseph, formerly ruler of Egypt, and Samuel the prophet and other faithful **men named with approval in the Bible at Hebrews 11th. chapter.** The WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY shall hold said title perpetually in trust for the use of any or all of the men above named as representatives of God's kingdom on earth and that **such men shall have possession and use of said property** hereinabove described as they may deem for the best interest for the work in which they are engaged. Any persons appearing to take possession of said premises **shall first prove and identify themselves** to the proper officers of said Society as the person or persons described in Hebrews chapter eleven and in this deed." *Golden Age* 1930 Mar 19 pp.400,401


golden age 1930 p.400 Bethsarim Deed


golden age 1930 p.401 Bethsarim Deed

Click on the thumbnails for a scan of the deed as quoted in the 1930 *Golden Age*.

In 1931, *The Messenger* contained an article on Bethsarim, with some interesting photos, including Rutherford seated in front of the fireplace.


Page 8 THE MESSENGER, SA
His Bedroom, and the Famous Nightcap Which So Amused the Newspaper Men.
BETH-SARIM doubt be awakened from the sleep of

Bethsarim Fireplace

Click for a 17MB scan of the 1931 Messenger.

Rutherford's imagination that Jehovah was going to resurrect the Princes to live in California shared the American centric views of similar religions such as the Mormons. In 1942 the 'House of Princes' was sold, proving false the statement that it would be "perpetually" and "forever at the disposal of the aforementioned princes." Why did the Watchtower board of directors decide to sell Beth-Sarim? The *Watchtower* 1947 December 15 explained:


Rutherford i pałac, jaki zbudował w Kalifornii dla proroków, którzy w jego mniemaniu mieli powstać w roku 1925 oraz jego limuzyna. Zdję-
Earthly Home For Israel Kings

"It had fully served its purpose and was now only serving as a monument quite expensive to keep; our faith in the return of the men of old time whom the King Christ Jesus will make princes in ALL the earth (not merely in California) is based, not upon that house Beth-Sarim, but upon God's Word of promise."

The *Proclaimers* book contains one of the very few mentions of Beth-Sarim since 1950. The

Rutherford at Bethsarim

statement makes it appear to have been purchased predominantly for the health of Rutherford.

> ""House of the Princes"
> Brother Rutherford had a severe case of pneumonia after his release from unjust imprisonment in 1919. Thereafter, he had only one good lung. In the 1920's, under a doctor's treatment, he went to San Diego, California, and the doctor urged him to spend as much time as possible there. From 1929 on, Brother Rutherford spent the winters working at a San Diego residence he had named Beth-Sarim. Beth-Sarim was built with funds that were a direct contribution for that purpose. The deed, which was published in full in "The Golden Age" of March 19, 1930, conveyed this property to J. F. Rutherford and thereafter to the Watch Tower Society." *Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* p.76

This description may not be that far from the truth. Rutherford summered in Europe and wintered at Beth-Sarim. During the Great Depression he owned two luxury Cadillac's. He was well known for excessive use of alcohol, even printing an article against the prohibition in the *Watchtower* 1924 Nov 1 pp.323-326. Whilst it is possible Rutherford believed in his own teachings that the end was going to arrive in his life time, the purchase of Beth-Sarim was as much for his own benefit as that of the resurrected princes.



Beth Sarim Rutherford Pond



Rutherford's Cadillac



Rutherford Drunk

Beth-Shan

A second, little mentioned property was purchased next to Beth-Sarim, called Beth-Shan. The only time Watchtower literature ever mentioned it was in the *Consolation* 1942 May 27 p.3

"The judge decided to continue the case so that the new site could be brought before the Planning Commission... the second plot was a proper place for burial.... The Planning Commission, who deliberated for more than two weeks, investigating the site, was haled before the court, and denied the second application for a cemetery.... New location for interment was almost in the center of the property known as Beth-Shan, which is roughly 75 acres of canyon and mesa land, adjoining Beth-Sarim but separated by a half-mile width of canyon. This property, also belonging to

> WATCHTOWER, has one small and one large dwelling on it and a few outhouses, and consists of some fruit trees and other cultivated patches in aggregate about seven acres, and about 65 acres of unreclaimed brush, either too steep, or rocky, or inaccessible for development.... Judge Rutherford, in a discussion before his death, had said that as a second choice he wished to be buried somewhere on these wild acres. In order that all the objections made in regard to the first site near to Kensington Heights might be removed to this new site, it was requested that only a ten-foot-square cemetery be granted. The spot was also inaccessible except by a private road a half mile long and closed by a gate."

Though the *Consolation* discusses Beth-Sarim in regards to Rutherford's desire to be buried there the property deed read similar to that of Beth-Sarim;

> "NOW THEREFORE this trust is created and said trustee shall hold the title to said property in trust for the use and benefit of the following named persons, whose names appear in the Bible at the book of Hebrews, chapter eleven, verses one to forty, to wit: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sara, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthae, David, Samuel."

It appears that Beth-Shan had a threefold purpose; to house the princes, to be a burial place for Rutherford and to provide protection during Armageddon. Word spread that a bomb shelter was built at Beth-Shan. This was adamantly denied in a 1940 *Watchtower*.

> "Some unreliable person is responsible for the circulation of a report that **Beth-Sarim** is being enlarged as a place of security and that this is being built by the Society. There is absolutely not one word of truth in the report. Those who are interested in the Theocracy would better be circulating the kingdom message rather than false imaginations of others." *Watchtower* 1940 Jun 1 p.162

The reliability of the Watchtower report is questionable, as it claimed the rumor was about Beth-Sarim, not Beth-Shan, hence avoiding answering whether or not Beth-Shan contained a bomb shelter.

Rutherford's Burial

Rutherford wished to be buried at either Beth-Sarim or Beth-Shan. On Rutherford's death Knorr and the Watchtower Society went to court in an attempt to have Rutherford buried at Beth-Sarim. As shown in the *Consolation* 1942 May 27 insertion below, this was to do with Rutherford's fanciful belief in the return of the "the King of the East" to Beth-Sarim and his need to face "the rising sun" upon that return. Knorr lost the case, but his action postponed Rutherford's burial for three and a half months after he died.

Written 2007. Latest update Oct 2016.

Paul Grundy 2005 - 2016

Judge Rutherford looked for the early triumph of "the King of the East", Christ Jesus, now leading the host of heaven, and he desired to be buried at dawn facing the rising sun, in an isolated part of the ground which would be administered by the princes, who should return from their graves. Even his burial request was a token of faith.

Consolation 1942 May 27 regarding Rutherford's Burial



Judge Rutherford smirk

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Ryanair passenger fined for crapping on runway

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Jen Mills for Metro.co.ukThursday 13 Oct 2016 2:24 pm



Ryanair passenger fined for crapping on runway

Nature is a cruel mistress (Picture: Getty)

A Ryanair customer has been fined £2,700 for pulling down his pants and crapping on the tarmac after getting off a plane.

The man, aged 68, was said to be a state of 'mild agitation' when he shocked more than 50 other passengers by defecating where he stood,

It would never happen on British Airways, eh?

After the man relieved himself on September 30, he was arrested.



RyanAir passenger fined for crapping on runway

Brindisi International Airport. The man is not pictured (Picture: Getty)

He is believed to have made the trip to go on holiday in Lecce.

But the vacation piggybank had to be raided when he was fined 3,000 euros, according to Italian media, for 'acts contrary to public decency'.

A Ryanair spokesman told Metro: 'An individual was detained by local police at Brindisi Airport on September 30. This is a matter for local police.'

MetroUK

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The Satanic Scare of Lyford Indiana

Updated on July 14, 2016
14 hours ago from Indiana, USA Author

exemplore.com

- The Satanic Scare of Lyford Indiana



Mosaic of Satan in Hell at the Baptistry of San Giovanni (Florence, Italy)

Mosaic of Satan in Hell at the Baptistry of San Giovanni (Florence, Italy)

“Satan! He’s everywhere! Beware, beware, beware!” -- So rang the words on the poster at the First Baptist Church in Clinton, Indiana. It was an odd poster, sporting an overly horny devil, and one that stuck in my mind as a young man. I saw it one time only, having attended a service there once due to being in the Cub Scouts (we used one of their buildings for our meetings). The Catholic Church and associated parochial school that I attended was less brimstone, but they certainly were stressed about Ol’ Scratch, too.

Welcome to the United States’ great Satanic scare of the 1980s. Conservative Christians were quite uptight about everyone being a Satanist to such a degree that it filtered through to even the more liberal churches and the non-religious. Everywhere you looked, there was Old Nick. I’m not sure how I made it out without being demeaned as one myself. I listened to heavy metal music, played Dungeons and Dragons, and loved Halloween. Add in my anti-authoritarian streak and a slight anti-religious outlook, not overly healthy at a school where nuns whacked your knuckles. I was nearly batting a thousand on the “oh, my god, he’s the devil” roster.



Satan - Dante's Divine Comedy (Gustave Dore 1832-1883)

Satan - Dante's Divine Comedy (Gustave Dore 1832-1883)

In general, the scare was little more than just that. “In general.” In specifics, there were a few things going on around my hometown of Lyford, Indiana (right across the Wabash River from Clinton) that were downright spooky. One was occurring during this time period and the other well before. Below are the facts and folklore that I’ve collected on both of these.

I was recently talking about this with a friend and had spent a little time in my hometown visiting family not long ago, and this was brought to the front of my mind. I dug out the old stories I’d written down years ago (enough that I could use the word “decades” and it would be accurate). Having been a paperboy and then mowing the local park gave a fair bit of interaction with the older, more pickled, “gentlemen” of the hamlet, as well as the local minister, from which I received these stories. I then got in touch with some other childhood friends to firm up a few things, on both pieces below.

Luther as the Devil's Bagpipes (Eduard Schoen 1535)

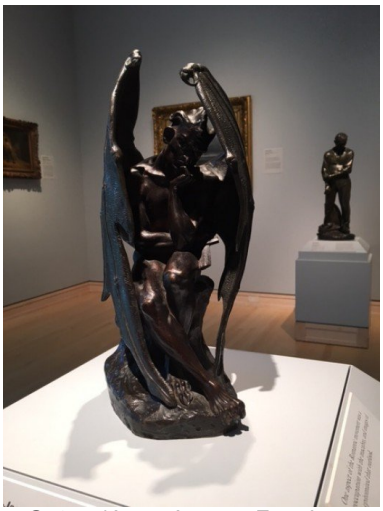


Luther as the Devil's Bagpipes (Eduard Schoen 1535)

Part One of Two: The Parke-Vermillion Satanic Cult of the 1980s (also known as the very short section)

During the ‘80s, there was supposedly a local cult of Satanists in the Lyford-Clinton area. They were said to meet on the Parke County side (just outside of Lyford) at night and dance around a campfire and perform animal sacrifices. True, this comes from the old “friends-of-a-friend” side, but it was still quite interesting. One of my closest friends insisted that his mom worked with one of them at a local school, and this person had admitted to the dancing and hinted at the sacrifices. His mom would refuse to talk about it, though, but certainly did seem to stay clammed up due to fear and not due to her son telling tall tales – something he was not prone to do in any case. Another friend’s mother worked at the local library, and one of her colleagues was always gossiping about this.

I can say that there were two things that I personally encountered that lends truth to the tales. The first was a large pile of animal skins that I found while hiking in the woods near my house, up by the railroad tracks. This was no small pile, either. It was quite large, with more than dozen skins. These were obviously cat skins. Why do I say obvious? Beyond growing up in a way that gave knowledge of fauna in general, there were enough pieces of the heads and tails that the bodies were most definitely feline. It was very disturbing, slightly surreal, and extremely maddening, as I found myself more angry than scared.



Satan (Jean-Jacque Feuchere 1807-1852) -- photo of sculpture taken by author at Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Satan (Jean-Jacque Feuchere 1807-1852) -- photo of sculpture taken by author at Indianapolis Museum of Art.

The second was that, after having found the animal furs, a couple of friends and I made a pact to sneak up on them if we ever saw their campfire. We had our chance at the annual Little Italy Festival, when we saw a campfire back in the woods, near the river’s bank, as we were walking across the Wabash River Bridge. We had heard the cult was going to do something big during the Festival, but nothing ever arose out of that gossip. We were hoping to catch them performing whatever ceremony they were doing.

So we walked through the woods and closed in on the campfire. There was definitely music and dancing. Seeing as how one of my friends didn’t even make it off the bridge and into the woods and the second stopped when we heard the music, I’m still slightly ashamed to say that I only went a little further on my own. To this day, my best guess is that I heard Ozzy Osbourne music playing, but seeing as he was one of my favorite artists, that could have just been in my head. There were shapes and shadows bouncing around as if they were dancing, but I just didn’t have it in me to go further.

Saint Wolfgang and the Devil (Michael Pacher 1435-1498)

In the end, I can’t say for sure it was the cult. I heard later, through the gossip grapevine, that it more than likely was. Seeing as how it would have just been one fourteen year old boy taking a chance on getting caught by who knows what, I think I made the right choice, but it does bother me that I’ll never know for sure.



Saint Wolfgang and the Devil (Michael Pacher 1435-1498)



Osculum Infame (the shameful kiss) - image from the Malleus Maleficarum (1608)

Osculum Infame (the shameful kiss) - image from the Malleus Maleficarum (1608)

Part Two of Two: The Less than Holy Beginning of Lyford and the Haunted Lyford School (also known as "section the longer")

It starts with the Reverend John Lyford, the first ordained Christian minister to come to American shores. Using the term "reverend" may not be overly appropriate, though. The reason he came to America in the first place was due to raping a woman in Ireland and he needed to avoid her husband. Once in the States, he was exiled from Plymouth Colony for indecent and immoral behaviors, part of which had to do with whispers of witchcraft, but definitely had to do with having affairs, one of which resulted in an out-of-wedlock bastard.

Though I could write a whole section on John Lyford, it is his bastard that leads directly to our little hamlet of Lyford. While his father passed away still on the eastern seaboard in 1649, his son rambled across the burgeoning colonies, eventually setting up his own church on the western side of either Massachusetts or the eastern side of what was soon going to become the colony of New York, the exact location being a little fuzzy.



Engraving from the Compendium Maleficarum (Francesco Maria Guazzo 1610)

Engraving from the Compendium Maleficarum (Francesco Maria Guazzo 1610)

Legend has it that the church was a front for John Lyford, the bastard son of John Lyford. Angered at being shunned for both his father's actions and for his illegitimate birth, he started his own coven, keeping appearances up as best he could and moving west or south whenever necessary.

And descended through several generations from this Lyford, according to the legends of the Lyford town elders, comes W.H. Lyford, who was a vice president of the Chicago & Eastern Railroad, which ran through the area that would become the town of Lyford. Now, there is absolutely no indication that this particular member of the Lyford clan was anything other than a fine upstanding member of society and that he spent little if any time in the town of Lyford at all. The naming of the town was simply out of recognition and I have zero interest in trying to make any other connection, other than what I've been told and what is written above.

The Satanic and witchcraft connection occurs with the building of Lyford School, home of the Flying Trojans. A K-8 (that's kindergarten through 8th grade, for my non-American readers) school, it

opened its doors in the 1918 as a brick, one story school house with a basement. It then closed them in the spring of 1956, as the smaller schools consolidated into the new Rosedale school. The school was auctioned off in 193 and torn down between 1964 and 1965.



Mascot plate engraving -- photo taken by author -- plate owned by author's father

Mascot plate engraving -- photo taken by author -- plate owned by author's father

Legend has it that a group of witches used the school, one of them being a teacher and having the keys to get in and out. They would meet at night during the new moon and at special holidays, especially Halloween, to perform their Satanic rituals. More under-the-radar than the modern Satanists, they stayed low-key and probably could have kept meeting for some time, except that during the course of a ritual one night, one of them died from a knife wound. Depending on who is telling the story, it was either an accident during a ceremony or one of her coven sisters sacrificed her.

The body was never found and the coven were smart enough to either disband or meet elsewhere, at least far enough removed that they do not enter the story any more. The outcome of the accident/murder was that the school was said to then be haunted. Footsteps would be heard and the occasional ankle would be grasped. At night, if you were walking by the outside of the school, you could hear laughter and screaming. Most of the tales involve the witch, although there are some that insist it is haunted by a deceased student instead, though none know the cause of death.



Extant piece of Lyford School's foundation, still showing through the ground. Extant piece of Lyford School's foundation, still showing through the ground. | Source Lyford Parke, former site of Lyford School. Lyford Parke, former site of Lyford School. | Source



Extant piece of Lyford School's foundation, still showing through the ground. Extant piece of Lyford School's foundation, still showing through the ground. | Source Lyford Parke, former site of Lyford School. Lyford Parke, former site of Lyford School. | Source

Now, these rumors and noises and such were not the reason for the school closing. Times change and schools merge. It's not as though most people put any stock into the haunting, as is the usual case with any ghost story.

The story does not end here, though. When the school was torn down in the ‘60s, locals were allowed to take home beams for their own use. Some of the structures these beams were used in then became associated with their own spooky tales, from footsteps to ghostly presences.



From Robert Burn's Tam-o-Shanter: Witches and Warlocks

From Robert Burn's Tam-o-Shanter: Witches and Warlocks

One friend from Lyford, of my own age, that I knew quite well would talk about his own experiences. His father took some of the beams to build a garage, which was then converted to a bedroom as the family grew. His oldest brother, who first had the room, mentioned hearing footsteps outside the door on occasion and also woke the parents up many times with his horrible tossing and turnings, in which he got completely wrapped up in his bedsheets. When it was finally the younger brother’s turn for the room, he, too, heard footsteps both outside in the hallway, as well as in the room. He would sometimes feel someone sit at the foot of the bed, but when he opened his eyes there was nothing there. He even talked about feeling a presence always vehemently staring at him.



Witches' Sabbath (Claude Gillot 1673 - 1722)

Witches' Sabbath (Claude Gillot 1673 - 1722)

Conclusion

Did the Satanic Scare of the ‘80s influence the tales the older gentleman and the pastor told me? More than likely at least somewhat in the case of the pastor. He was known to be full of fire and brimstone, but I only went to his actual services a couple of times. As far as the older gentlemen, I’m willing to call it a draw between things they’d heard and experienced being embellished a bit with the scare. Maybe sometimes older brothers play pranks, as a way of scaring his youngest brother, causing an imagination overload. Perhaps there is more to the Lyford family connection after all, even if it was unknown to the family themselves.

I do have one big caveat, and that is the view of Satanists and witches given above are from those who told the stories. I’ve met many Satanists and am friends with a couple, and they in no way reflect the cult as outlined above. The vast majority of Satanists do not kill animals. In fact, they’re usually atheistic in their outlook, and even the theistic Satanists/Luciferians would be horrified at this practice. Personally, I’m actually under the impression that this Satanic Cult that I’ve bene talking about was a group of teenagers or very young adults who just wanted some attention and wanted to scare people by doing horrible, stupid things.

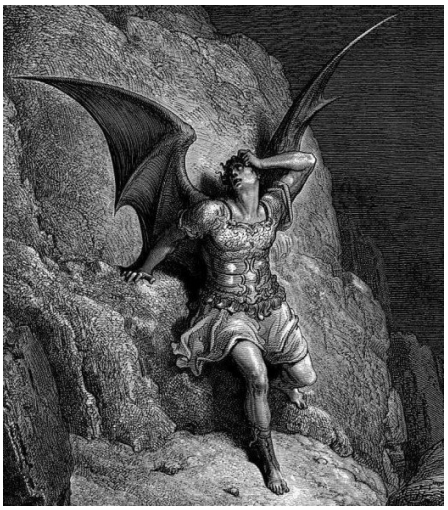
Death and the Devil Surprise Two Women (Daniel Hopfer circa 1520).



Death and the Devil Surprise Two Women (Daniel Hopfer circa 1520).

Modern witches, too, typically practice Earth magic or a form of Wicca and do not sign their names into any Satanic book. Most don't dance around naked by a fire, either, although a few that I know have admitted to doing so, but as much out of feminist freedom and power than anything else.

Thank you for indulging me. Perhaps someday I'll write this up more in the folklore style, using quotes and first name/last initial, but I wanted this first round to be more of a story and less academic. I hope it came through in an enjoyable, if somewhat creepy, manner. Maybe some time in the future I'll regale you with my personal stories of séances and Ouija boards. That is, if I feel like risking being stalked by the Devil again…



Lucifer - Paradise Lost (Gustave Dore 1832-1883)

Lucifer - Paradise Lost (Gustave Dore 1832-1883)

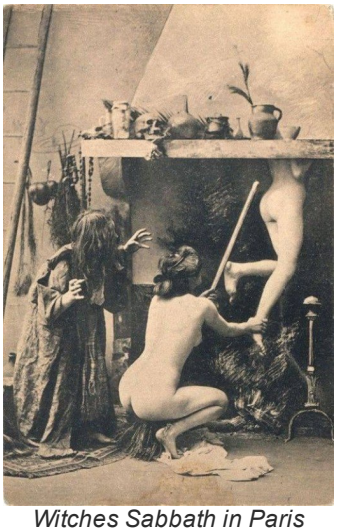
Additional notes:

- The word Lyford itself is Old English for Flax-Ford, a ford where flax grows, from "lin" = flax and "ford" = ford, and was a village in Berkshire, England. Lyford, Indiana, was platted out by William H. Bonner, on May 14th, 1892 and further extended platting performed by John B. Shaw, on August 8th, 1892. It was already called Lyford, starting in 1880, and before that was called Clinton Lock due to the river. The first recorded use of Lyford as a family name occurs with John de Lyford, in 1273, from the Oxfordshire Hundred Rolls.
- The Lyford School discussed here is not to be confused with the one room wooden school house that was built in Lyford in 1913, and then moved to just outside Rockville, Indiana to serve as the school at the Billie Creek Village historical site.
- I was able to find a picture of the Lyford School at the county library, but it is too old and fuzzy to be of any use on this site. I will try to clean it up as best as possible and post it on my Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/JamesSlavenWriter/
- I did meet a Satanist in '91, during my freshman year at college. He was at a formal dance that I also attended. Everyone seemed to be scared of him. Personally, I thought he was a douche, with a want-to-be Lucifer beard. I would imagine a real Satanist would have made him piss himself, as he didn't seem to have much to say when we bumped into each other (and yes, it was an accident).

Comments

Donnie

Enjoyed it James!



Witches Sabbath in Paris (postcards circa 1900-1910) Witches Sabbath in Paris (postcards circa 1900-1910) | Source Witches Sabbath in Paris (postcards circa 1900-1910) Witches Sabbath in Paris (postcards circa 1900-1910) | Source Witches Sabbath in Paris (postcards circa 1900-1910) Witches Sabbath in Paris (postcards circa 1900-1910) | Source



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Jacquie

That was wonderful! :D

Aeryck

I enjoyed reading this. I, too, was part of that Satanic scare back in the 80's. I lived right outside of Stilesville, IN, Hendricks County. Our house was right beside an old cemetery that is still there, in the field. It was the site of the old Stilesville Christian Church. My parents were interviewed by Cokie Roberts on NPR radio after they discovered my involvement with the occult. They confiscated all of my "satanic" items and books and turned them over to a local police officer who was investigating Satanic cults and were convinced that I was a member of one and was out to kill my father using some form of black magic, or worse. My belongings were given to a guy who called himself Merlin and claimed to be a witch from many generations. Needless to say, it was enough to make my parents decide to move out of the area in hopes that it would make me cut ties with my "Satanic adult friends" who were trying to brainwash me or something. I wish that I could find an old recording of that interview, as I had a copy on cassette for many years. I do remember that it was followed by the Gaia Living Earth theory, which I found ironic.

James

Wicked cool, Aeryck! Spooky and interesting, just as I like it!

Nancy Baysinger

Lyford school was a two story building. I know because I went to first grade there. I remember climbing the stairs.

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Freeman's Journal (Sydney, NSW : 1850 - 1932), Saturday 13 December 1884, page 5

THE CORNWALL FIASCO

On Tuesday (says the IRISHMAN, November 1), Gustavus C. Cornwall, late Secretary to the Post Office, and Captain Martin Oranmore Kirwan, were placed at the bar in the Commission Court, Green-street, before Mr. Justice Harrison, on an indictment charging them with conspiracy to procure the commission of indecent offences. Cornwall was accompanied into court by his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Dalyell, and Kirwan was flanked by his worthy cousin, Lord Oranmore and Brown. The names of the special jurors on the city and county panels, 200 in number, were drawn from the ballot-box by Mr. George Fottrell, Clerk of the Crown, and fifty-six jurors had answered, when Sergeant Hemphill and prisoners' counsel declared themselves satisfied with the answering. Messrs. Cornwall and Kirwan were acquitted, the jury adding that the Crown did not produce sufficient evidence. It is not clear whether the jury meant this rider as a hit at the prosecutors, but it is plain enough that the Crown made no effort to convict these chaste gentlemen. In the first place the indictment was framed in order to limit the time of the offences since 1881. This kindness on the part of the friendly and sympathetic prosecutors excluded the evidence of M'Kernan, and of another witness, a page, who had not appeared on the former trials. The next trick of the loop was a repetition of the attitude of indifference as to the composition of the jury. As in the former trial, the Crown did not challenge a single juror; they obligingly allowed the unspeakables to pack their own twelve. Against this we have no complaint to make if in all future trials the Government adhere to the same course. Comparing the conduct of the Crown in all past trials of a political or agrarian character with their inaction in the Cornwall-Kirwan cases, it is, of course, infamous. But, if the jury-packing system is now dropped for ever, and for every class of prisoner, we do not grudge the unmentionables their escape from the dock on Wednesday. "Not guilty, the evidence produced by the Crown not being considered sufficient." These are the significant terms in which the delivery was couched. Their plain meaning is that the Crown officials have connived at the escape of the prisoners from justice—that the law which should, in fulfilment of its original mission, punish the

National Library of Australia **http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110067571**

Freeman's Journal (Sydney, NSW : 1850 - 1932), Saturday 13 December 1884, page 5

from justice—that the law which should, in fulfilment of its original mission, punish the wicked, was in league with those charged with wickedness of the most awful character.

National Library of Australia **http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article110067571**

Texas neighbors seek to protect local alligator Thor from authorities

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Updated Oct. 12, 2016 at 12:30 PM
Follow @oddnewsupi

KATY, Texas, Oct. 12 (UPI) -- Residents of a Texas neighborhood are engaged in a dispute with authorities about efforts to capture an alligator living in a retention pond.

Fort Bend Municipal Utilities District 151 said plans were made to capture and relocate the alligator, dubbed Thor by locals, after landscaping crews reported being stalked by the reptile while working around the pond, located behind the Firethorne community near Katy in Fort Bend County.

Local resident Mason Weiler said he found the alligator hooked to a trap Saturday morning.

"I pulled on [the line] and sure enough the alligator started freaking out," Weiler told KTRK-TV.

"We decided that cutting it loose would be the right thing to do. We didn't know if it was a professional job," Weiler said. "Nobody in the neighborhood was aware he was gonna be removed, so I set him free. I thought that was the right thing to do."

MUD 151 said efforts to capture the gator have been suspended while officials consider requests from homeowners to leave Thor in the pond.

"No one has ever seen the gator anywhere, but in a few feet of the pond," homeowner DeLila Cooprider said.

Local resident MaryBeth Whitt started a GoFundMe page to raise awareness of Thor's plight and raise funds for an alligator rescue center.

"Our MUD put in a request to remove a 'nuisance alligator,' yet there have been no reports of Thor actually causing problems," Whitt wrote. "Earlier this week someone had placed traps around the lake to capture Thor, and due to the nature of the traps it does not look like like they were going to be used to relocate the alligator."

"I have made this page in hope to raise awareness of what is going on, and also to raise money that will be donated to a nearby alligator rescue center," she wrote.

Kim Byrne Whitt, MaryBeth's mother, said in a Facebook post the GoFundMe money might also go toward medical help for Thor, who residents fear could suffer consequences from still being attached to the hook from the trap.

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A brief overview on the Scandinavian folklore and the Norse mythology

thedockyards.com

The Dockyards

October 16, 2016By authorIn HistoryNorse mythologyScandinavia

A brief overview on the Scandinavian folklore and the Norse mythology

The Scandinavian folklore represents the entirety of myths, customs, traditions, legends, fables, and superstitions which stem from the Norse mythology and are shared by the Nordic countries of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands.



'The Princess in the Forest' by Swedish artist John Albert Bauer. Image source: www.pinterest.com

In spite of the fact that Iceland and the Faroe Islands are not geographically located in Scandinavia, due to cultural, linguistic, social, and historical affinities with the kingdoms of Scandinavia they are usually regarded as Scandinavian in terms of folklore as well.

Given its origins, this folklore is shared largely within the North Germanic-speaking countries (i.e. all Norden countries except for Finland), but it equally bears connections with the folklores of other Germanic nations, most notably with those of England and Germany. Nonetheless, several similarities can be, likewise, found in the folklores of Finland, the Baltic states, and the Slavic-speaking countries.



'Nøkken' — the water spirit — by Norwegian artist Theodor Severin Kittelsen. Image source: www.pinterest.com

With respect to the usage of the word 'folklore' in Scandinavia, it must be mentioned that the term is not preferred within an academic context. Much more accurately, 'Folketro' (literally meaning 'folklore' in Norwegian) or 'Folkesagn' (i.e. 'fairytales/folktales' in Danish) are used in order to replace 'folklore' in academic circles.

In stark contrast, while common speech is concerned, 'den Gamle Tro' (i.e. 'the old faith' in Danish) denotes 'folklore'. Folklore is often regarded as being part of mythology, and this is clearly the case in Scandinavia as well. Technically, while folklore represents low-mythology, the high-mythology is properly emblematised by the Norse mythology.

'Warrior on Skis' by Danish artist Kay Rasmus Nielsen, 1914. Illustration from the fairy tale book 'East of the Sun and West of the Moon' by Norwegian folklorists Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Engebretsen Moe. Image source: www.pinterest.com

To clarify the discrepancies, belief in old gods still exists in Scandinavian folklore, however it is not in the same form as in the Norse mythology. The most referenced deities that also appear in the Nordic folklore are Odin (who is believed to lead the 'Wild Hunt'), Thor (who is believed to fight against trolls using his thunders), Ullr (the Norse god of skiing), and Hœnir (the Æsir god who is mentioned to have helped Odin create mankind). Occasionally, the trickster god Loki (known also for being the brother of Thor) and Freyja (the Norse goddess of beauty, fertility, and love) appear described in various folktales as well.



A variety of mythical creatures are mentioned in the Nordic folktales. Among these, the most noteworthy ones to be described are the dwarves, the trolls, the elves, the hulder, the nokken, the mare (or 'nightmare'), the fossegrimen, the draugen, and invisible creatures. *For a list comprising 10 mythical beings from the Nordic folklore please check this link*.

Documentation sources and external links:

- Scandinavian folklore on www.wikipedia.org (in English)
- Among Gnomes and Trolls on www.wikipedia.org (in English)
- East of the Sun and West of the Moon on www.wikipedia.org (in English)
- John Bauer (Swedish illustrator) on www.wikipedia.org (in English)
- Kay Nielsen (Danish illustrator) on www.wikipedia.org (in English)
- Theodor Kittelsen (Norwegian illustrator) on www.wikipedia.org (in English)
- Nordic Folklore: Recent Studies, by Reimund Kvideland and Henning K. Sehmsdorf on Google Books
- Danish Folktales and Fairy Tales on www.oaks.nvg.org
- Norwegian Folktales (slightly modernised to make the reading easier) on www.oaks.nvg.org
- Swedish Fairy Tales and Legends on www.oaks.nvg.org
- Folktales of Iceland on www.oaks.nvg.org
- Some beings of Scandinavian folklore on www.scandinavianfolklore.blogspot
- Norse tales on www.norse-mythology.org
- Norse Mythology on www.mythencyclopedia.com
- Norse Mythology on www.hurstwic.org
- Norse mythology names on www.behindthename.com
- Glossary of Norse mythology on www.infoplease.com
- BBC Earth came to Iceland in search for elves and trolls on www.icelandmag.visir.is (in English)
- Celebrating Christmas with 13 trolls on www.iceland.is (in English)
- In Iceland, 'respect the elves' — or else' on www.theguardian.com
- A land of legend far Faroe away on www.bbc.com

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Scary 2016 election attracts its 1st actual ghoul candidate

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 3, 2016

BANGOR, Maine (AP) — An election cycle some have described as a fright appears to have attracted its first actual ghoul.

Signs are popping up around Bangor, Maine, advertising the campaign of Pennywise, the creepy clown from Stephen King's 1986 novel "It." The signs beseech residents to "Vote Pennywise" and include a picture of the clown showing his toothy smile.

Exactly what post Pennywise is running for is left unclear. The signs have been popping up around the downtown area of the city, the third largest in Maine.

King lives in Bangor and posted a picture of himself alongside one of the signs via his Twitter account.

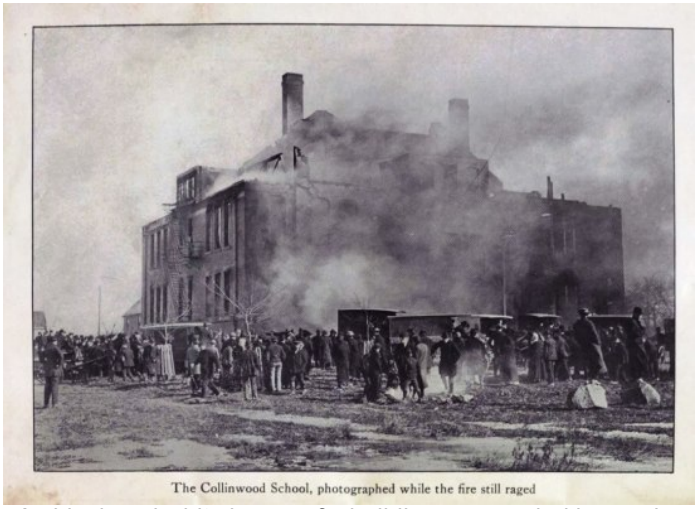
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The Collinwood School disaster influenced fire safety protocols

By Sarah Crosswy, October 14, 2016

With the academic year in full swing, schools across the country are beginning their first rounds of fire drills. Remember those? As alarms blare and lights flash, teachers calmly evacuate their students from the building as the students chat with their friends. To them, it is just another annoying fire drill that they will never actually have to use. But on March 4, 1908, Lake View School in Collinwood, Ohio, went up in flames when a furnace overheated, taking with it the lives of 172 students, as well as two teachers and one rescuer. It was the worst school fire in the history of the country and set in motion the development of easy and safe evacuation routes, including fire exits with safety bars, for schools and other public buildings.



An black and white image of a building surrounded by smoke. People gather around it, many in hats and winter jackets. The full caption at the bottom of the picture reads "The Collinwood School, photographed while the fire still raged"

The Lake View School was a four-story building where approximately 366 students between kindergarten and sixth grade went to school. Its outer walls were built of stone, but the majority of the inside was constructed of wood and supported by large wooden beams. In addition, the floors were oiled, a common practice of the time, which quickly fueled the fire. The layout of the school was also problematic. The main staircase ran from the front door on the ground level all the way to the top, with no fire doors or exits. This meant that once the ceiling joists above the furnace caught fire, the stairwell acted as a chimney, quickly spreading the fire. The building burnt so quickly that escape routes were blocked within minutes. Anyone trapped inside had to either quickly descend the staircase or get out through the fire escape on the top floor.

After the fire, many blamed the school's custodian, saying that he left one of the main exits locked so that even when students reached the door, they were trapped. Parents were able to break windows and pull some children out, but most were stuck behind the thick wooden doors. Many have also blamed inward opening doors, when in fact it was the type of doorknob latch that was the culprit. Large numbers of panicking children could not open the latches and ended up crushing each other in an effort to escape.

Because of the tragedy in Collinwood, fire safety regulations were changed not just in schools, but in public buildings all over the country. Exit routes and fire escape designs were altered. Doorways were widened and new doorknob styles were put into use.



Two photos of doorknobs. They are both brass-colored. The one on the top has eight sides and says "Board of Education City of New York" and has a keyhole in the middle. The bottom one is round with engraved laurel leaves, a hand holding a torch and "Board of Education City of Chicago" carved in.

As part of the education collection here at the museum, we have 18 doorknobs from the early 1900s that were used in schools across the country. As can be seen in the images above, many of them were beautifully decorated and much more ornate than today's doorknobs. Knobs were decorated with a wide variety of motifs ranging from simple ones imprinted with a city name to ornate ones decorated with scenes of learning. A simple knob is shown above from the city of New York. Aside from the inscription around the border, it is plain but unique because of its octagonal shape and key hole. An example of more elaborate use of imagery and symbolism is seen in the knob to the left from the city of Chicago. The center of the knob is an image of a torch, which often represents knowledge and learning, and its border is surrounded by fig leaves.

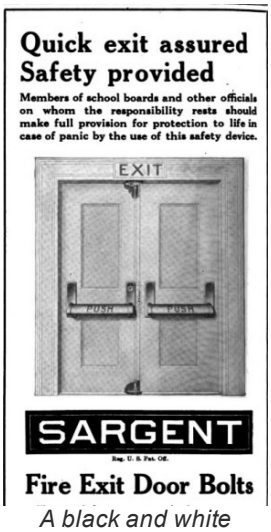


Photo of two doorknowbs that both say "Public School" with some fancy scrollwork

Doorknobs were produced for specific schools, often customized at the request of the school board. For example, in 1896, the New York City Board of Education overhauled its schools in an attempt to modernize them. Heading up the project was Charles B. J. Snyder, building superintendent, who designed almost 350 schools in the Gothic style. Shown above are examples of doorknobs for the cities of New York and New Orleans made by the Sargent Company. The knobs are oval in shape, which one does not find very often these days. Noticeably different is the patina on each knob. The New York knob is made of cast brass, as opposed to several pieces soldered together. Brass was a common material because of its resistance to rust. The New Orleans knob is made out of a cast metal.

In addition to changes in doorknobs, crash bars (also called panic bars) were added to exit doors much like the ones we have today. Shown above are two examples of panic bars, one from the early 20th century and the other from the late 20th century. The latter is a modern example of a panic bar, based on the earlier Von Duprin model.

The man who originated the concept, Carl Prinzler, was inspired by the 1903 Iroquois Theatre Fire in Chicago, in which almost 600 perished because of locked doors. He enlisted the help of architectural engineer Henry DuPont to develop a way for doors to be locked from the outside but still allow persons on the inside to leave quickly in the case of an emergency. After the tragic loss of



A black and white advertisement for Sargent Fire Exit Door Bolts. There is an illustration of a pair of doors with the push handles and an exit sign overhead. Above the illustration on the page is text selling the product.



A vertical photograph of a fire door in the museum. It is white in color and has a push bar for opening. It is closed in the picture. There is a white sign under the window of the door that reads "Fire Exit No Re-entry" in red letters

life in the Collinwood Fire of 1908, the first model was produced by the Vonnegut Hardware Company. Buildings are now made of more fire resistant materials, such as walls and floors with much less flammable finishes.

In the time around Fire Prevention Week, pause to consider how to evacuate your building if there were a fire. Most likely there is an easily marked route on a map somewhere on a wall, one that ends at a door with a panic bar. While not as attractive as the fancy metal doorknobs of the early 20th century, panic bars provide a practical and safe method for egress during a fire.

Sarah Crosswy is a graduate of the College of Wooster and after being an intern working with curator Debbie Schaefer-Jacobs in the Division of Home and Community Life is continuing as a volunteer. She is assisting in cataloging the Dr. Richard Lodish American School Teaching Collection, a recent acquisition.

Constitution Avenue, NW
Between 12th and 14th Streets
Washington, D.C.

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SHOCK CLAIMS: Biggest SUPERMOON in 70 years to bring 'second coming of Christ'

express.co.uk

express_logo_poppy

SHOCK CLAIMS: Biggest SUPERMOON in 70 years to bring 'second coming of Christ'

A HUGE supermoon heading our way in DAYS will bring with it the end of life and the second coming of Jesus, it's being predicted.

By Sean Martin
PUBLISHED: 14:30, Thu, Nov 3, 2016 | UPDATED: 17:37, Thu, Nov 3, 2016

On November 14, the moon will appear 14 per cent bigger and 20 per cent brighter than usual as our satellite reaches its closest point to Earth.

The last time the moon was this close was in 1948 and will be as small a distance until 2034.

This, coupled with the rarity of it being the second successive month that there will be a supermoon and a third to come in December, has prompted fears then arrival could bring about the apocalypse.

Many have pointed to the last time the moon was this close, 1948, was also the year that Israel was declared an independent nation.



GETTY

What is significant about Israel is that it is considered the Holy Land in Christianity.

Additionally, adding more fuel to the fire, in the weeks building up to the supermoon, the Tomb of Christ has been excavated for the first time.

One person wrote on Facebook: "The largest supermoon in decades, and the same month that the tomb of Jesus Christ is unearthed.... guarantee that something big is about to go down."

Facebook group Kingdom League International wrote on the social media site: "With all the craziness going on consider this. There's going to be the closest super moon since 1948. The moon is a type of Jesus as it reflects the light of the sun (type of the Father).

"Does anyone remember what occurred in 1948? How about Israel became a nation (Isa 66:8 fulfilled). This is going to be a significant year for the cause of Christ."

When linked to the Bible, the significance of the supermoon is high for Christians.



GETTY



GETTY

In Luke 21:25-26, the Bible says: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and looking after those things which are coming on the earth."

However, scientists have stated that there is nothing to fear regarding the impending supermoon.

NASA explained: "When the moon is near the horizon, it can look unnaturally large when viewed through trees, buildings, or other foreground objects.

"The effect is an optical illusion, but that fact doesn't take away from the experience."

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A secret Nazi military base has been discovered in the Arctic

independent.co.uk

Scientists reported finding bunkers, rusted bullets and other relics dating from the Second World War

- Shehab Khan
- Friday 21 October 2016

A secret Nazi military base in the Arctic has been discovered by Russian scientists.

The site – located on the island of Alexandra Land 1,000km from the North Pole 0150 was constructed in 1942, a year after Adolf Hitler invaded Russia.

It was codenamed “Schatzgraber” or “Treasure Hunter” by the Germans and was primarily used as a tactical weather station.

The base was abandoned when the scientists stationed there were poisoned by polar bear meat in 1944 and had to be rescued by a German U-boat.

It has been rediscovered 72 years later and more than 500 objects have been found, including a batch of well preserved documents, the *Daily Mail* reported.

The ruins of bunkers, rusted bullets and other relics dating from the Second World War have been discovered at the site, many of which remain in a good condition having been preserved by the cold weather.

The island was vital during the Second World War as the meterological reports it produced were essential for planning the movement of troops, submarines and ships.

The name given to the base has led some to believe it may have had another secret mission – with some specialists speculating that it might have been used for the pursuit of ancient relics.

Alexandra Land was a disputed territory for a number of years but is now part of the Russian Federation.

Russia is thought to be looking to build its own permanent military base there today.

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Mysterious 'lost' street is discovered beneath a town

08:21 EST, 25 September 2016 |

dailymail.co.uk

- **Discovery was made beneath Georgian townhouse in Stockton-on-Tees**
- **Larder can still be seen, while window and door frames still remain**
- **Homes are 200 years old and may have been occupied by domestic staff**

By Emily Chan For Mailonline

A 'lost' street has been discovered underground - with secret tunnels leading to other parts of the town.

The mysterious underground homes were found during a £1m refurbishment of a Grade II listed Georgian townhouse in Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham.

An old larder can still be seen in the living quarters, which date back more than 200 years, while wooden window and door frames remain intact.



A 'lost' street has been discovered underground in Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham

Secret tunnels were found in the basement of the property leading to other parts of the town

The discovery was made during a £1m refurbishment of a Grade II Listed Georgian townhouse



Jeff Highfield, who owns Gloucester House, told The Gazette that the underground living quarters used to have access to street level.

It is believed the tunnels leading from the underground homes, which may have been occupied by domestic staff, led to other parts of Stockton.

Mr Highfield said: 'What we found is what appears to be the living quarters from we assume some 200 years ago or more.

'There used to be access to street level and according to the previous mayors that have been down here we believe these are tunnels that link to other parts of Stockton.

Wooden window frames and door frames still remain in the living quarters



Pictured is one of the larders in the underground homes that date back 200 years

'This used to be effectively a street below the street.'

The row of Georgian townhouses used to be known as Paradise Row and was owned by wealthy townspeople.



Some of the rooms may have been used to store animals as the local cattle market used to be opposite.

Gloucester House was turned into a hotel and later council offices. Mr Highfield said he now plans to preserve the underground homes and tunnels.

Other features that still remain include cavities in the wall used to hold candles



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'Serial killer' Stephen Port's 999 call claiming 'victim' was 'drunk'

11:09 EST, 12 October 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com
MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Listen to chilling 999 call 'made by gay serial killer after he dumped the body of his first victim outside his flat claiming he'd had a seizure or was DRUNK'

- **Stephen Port is accused of drugging men for six, killing four of them**
- **He dumped their bodies near his home to make deaths look like accidents**
- **Jury have today been played a 999 call reporting one of them on the street**

By Richard Spillett, Crime Correspondent For Mailonline

Serial killer Stephen Port claimed in a 999 call to have found his first alleged victim collapsed from a seizure 'or just drunk', a court heard.

Port, 41, is accused of murdering four men over 15 months by spiking their drinks with date rape drug GHB in order to have sex with them at his flat while they were unconscious.

The chef went on to dump his victims' bodies metres from his home in Barking, east London, jurors have been told.





The jury in the trial of alleged serial killer Stephen Port (left) have been played the 999 call Port made after allegedly dumping the body of Anthony Walgate (right) near his east London flat

Port was jailed for eight months for perverting the course of justice by lying to police about the circumstances of the death of his first alleged victim, Anthony Walgate.

The 23-year-old fashion student had met Port through website Sleepboys and agreed to go to his home for a sleepover, the court heard.

He was found dead by a paramedic in a communal area of the block of flats where Port lived in Cooke Street, Barking in the early hours of June 19, 2014.

In the 999 call played to jurors, Port told the operator: 'Cooke Street, appears a young boy looks like he's collapsed outside, I don't know.

'Looks like he has collapsed or had a seizure or something - or just drunk.'

He went on: 'I'm just going to get my car. I have got to get my car, the parking.'

In the call to emergency services, Port said he thought Walgate was 'drunk' or had a 'seizure'



The operator told him not to worry about that and asked what number he was calling from, but Port was gone.

The operator rang back to ask if the man was awake and breathing and the defendant said he did not know, the court heard.

Paramedic Anthony Neil arrived at the scene to find Mr Walgate was already dead and cold to the touch.



Port is also accused of killing Daniel Whitworth during his alleged murder spree

He said in a statement: 'On the pedestrian walkway, I saw the outline of a figure in a sitting position against something.

'He appeared deceased. He was not breathing and was extremely cold to the touch and he did not have a pulse.'

He covered him in a red blanket and alerted police to a suspicious death, jurors were told.

After police arrived, officers tracked down Port through his phone number as a 'significant witness'.

Det Con Malcolm Young took a statement from Port later that day.

In it, Port said he had left for work at Stagecoach bus company at about 8.30pm on June 18.

On finding a young man lying on the floor, he told the officer he had 'tried to raise him by slapping his face' and he 'made a gurgling noise'.

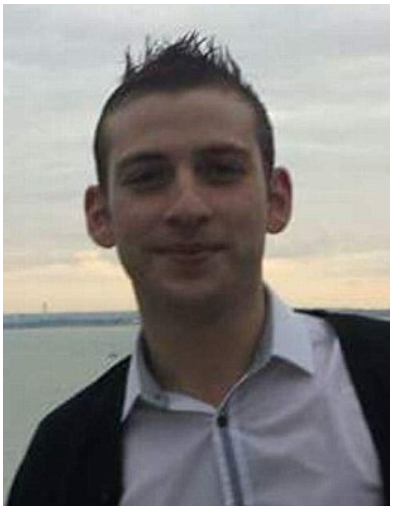
The defendant said he lifted him up and put him against a wall next to a post box but he 'still did not wake up'.

Port said after dialling 999, he went into his flat and fell asleep, rather than waiting for a paramedic to arrive.

Jack Taylor (left) was found dead in September 2015. Gabriel Kovari (right) in 2014

Giving evidence, pathologist Olaf Biedrzycki confirmed the cause of death was GHB intoxication.

He told the court he had been informed that Mr Walgate's jeans zip was undone and he noticed that his underwear was 'inside out and back to front'.





He also identified 14 separate injuries on the body including grazes and bruising to the inside upper left arm.

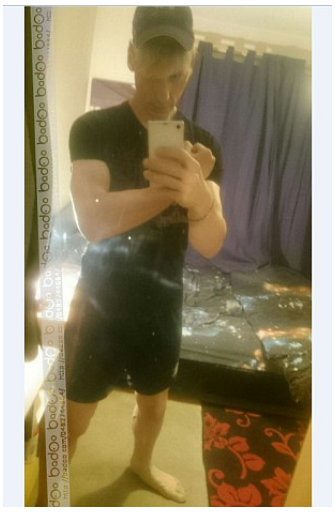
Port denies 29 offences against a total of 12 men - including four murders, seven rapes, four sex assaults and administering a substance with intent.

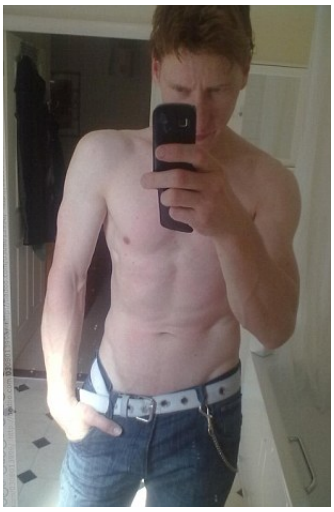
ALLEGED SERIAL KILLER USED SERIES OF ONLINE IDENTITIES TO MEET YOUNG MEN, JURY ARE TOLD

Stephen Port was an avid user of gay social media websites and created a series of different profiles to meet young men.

On one website, called 'Fitlads', Port used the username 'Basketballguy21'.

With a fake profile picture, he claimed to be a student called 'Drake' from Ilford in Essex, looking for 'sex and maybe more with right guy'.





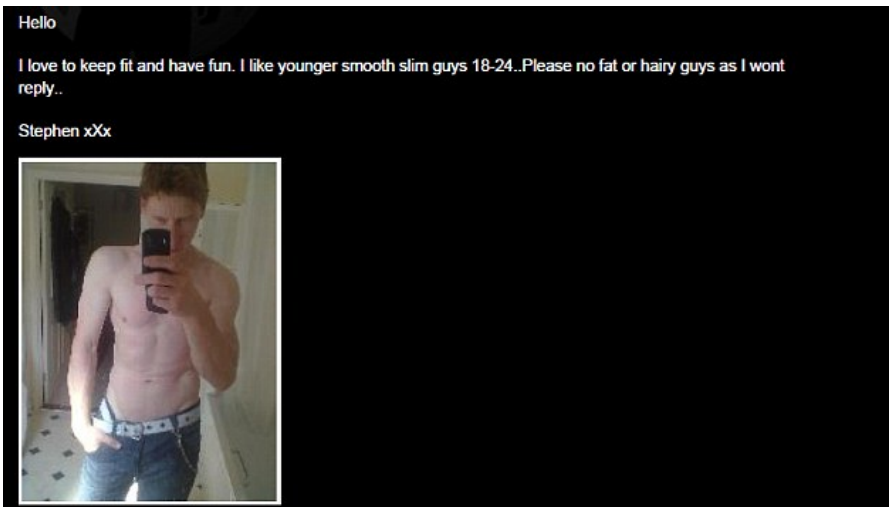
Two of the pictures posted online by Port as he attempted to meet young men

In another, with the username 'shyhoney', Port said: 'I like younger smooth slim guys 18-24.'

Port, now aged 41, sometimes claimed to be as young as 28 years old and said he was looking for 'Twink types' no older than 25.

On Badoo, he said: 'I am romantic, caring and would take good care of my partner. I am successful, educated and determined.'

Port also had profiles on website 'Slaveboys', where he claimed to have graduated from the University of Oxford and said he was a special needs teacher.



In one of his online profiles he called himself 'shyhoney' and said 'no fat or hairy guys'

The court has heard how the bus garage cook advertised himself as an escort on a website called 'Sleepyboys'.

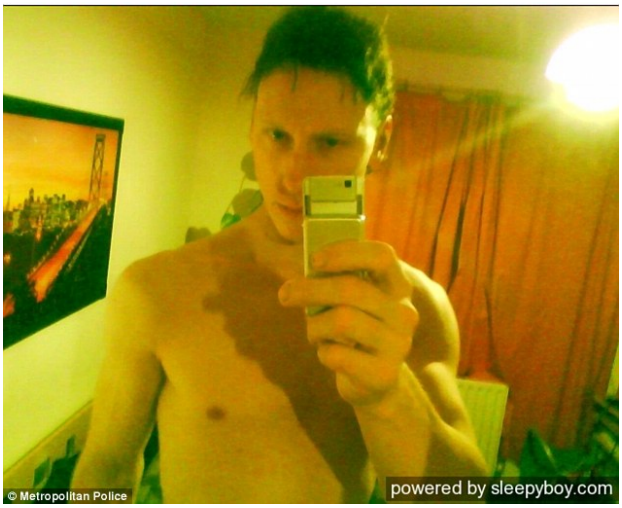
Port would charge £150 per hour or £350 for a night and promised: 'Full service given.'

'Serial killer' loved Transformers and once had a huge stash of drugs on his coffee table, neighbour reveals

Stephen Port was obsessed with Transformers, kept a stash of drugs on his coffee table and bragged of 'pimping out' a boyfriend, a friend told jurors.

Former neighbour Ryan Edwards recalled how the 41-year-old chef had strange character 'quirks', which included trips to Toys R Us to stock up on the children's toys.

Giving evidence at the Old Bailey, he told how Port was his first 'gay friend' he met after moving to Cooke Street in Barking, east London. They soon decided they were not each other's type and the relationship was strictly 'platonic'.



Port, pictured in a photo he posted online, was obsessed with Transformers, the court heard

Mr Edwards said: 'I felt he was a little bit hard work frankly. I'm an outgoing, gregarious person, quite chatty. Stephen is a quiet person, withdrawn in himself.

'Quite quickly it was apparent to me Stephen had a love bordering on obsession with Transformers.'

He said it was 'quite strange' for an adult collector to buy new figures at Toys R Us.



Neighbour Ryan Edwards told of Port's bizarre habits at the Old Bailey today

On one occasion, Mr Edwards met up with Port and his then-partner in McDonald's.

He said: 'It was unusual. We arrived at McDonald's and Danny sat away from us so I remember saying to Stephen, "Why is Danny sitting over there?" and Stephen replied, "Why, I'm pimping him out."

'I didn't take it seriously so I nervously laughed at the time but Stephen was not laughing.'

On another occasion, Mr Edwards went to Port's flat and was 'excruciatingly embarrassed' to see a large container of drugs on his coffee table.

The witness, who said he was anti-drugs, described the contents as lots of small bottles and sachets of white powder.

He said: 'That whole meeting was very strange. It's 1pm in the afternoon and when Stephen answered the door he stumbled out and said he was sleeping. He was worse for wear and red rings

around his eyes.'

Port went to get a new boyfriend from the bedroom and he appeared 'equally, if not more rough'. He sat on the sofa in a 'zombie-like' fashion, Mr Edwards said.

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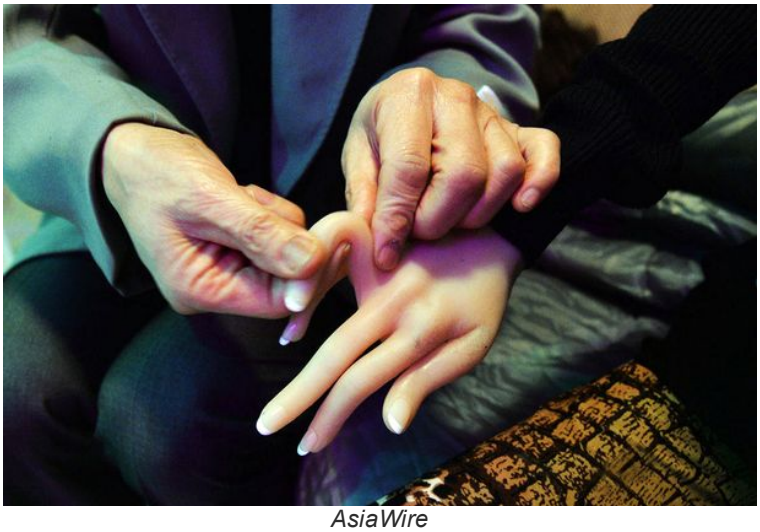
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70-year-old man gets sex doll that looks like his dead wife when she was young

21:46, 10 Nov 2016 Updated 23:00, 10 Nov 2016 By Daniel O'Mahony

mirror.co.uk

Sex doll firm makes grieving man exact replica of his dead wife wearing her OLD UNDERWEAR



AsiaWire

The man with the doll at his home

A lonely pensioner who bought a sex doll after his wife's death has been given a new model - one that looks like a young version of his late spouse.

Zhang Wenliang, 70, spent nearly £2,000 on the original doll in August this year as a method of overcoming the grief of losing his wife to cancer.

But he suffered another form of bereavement when the doll starting coming apart from overuse.



AsiaWire

Zhang Wenliang said he was 'satisfied' with the new model

The retired doctor from Chongzhou City, in south-western China's Sichuan Province, saw his story spread across the country earlier this year when pictures of him and his doll went viral.

After getting wind of his troubles, the doll's manufacturer's are said to have contacted Zhang, and offered to make him a new one free of charge - but this time in the image of his dead wife.

They asked the grieving man for an old photo of his wife, who died last year, and spent the next few weeks creating the custom-made sex doll.

Zhang's happy ending came this week when his replacement was delivered
He said: 'I'm very grateful that [the doll-makers] have shown such compassion to this old man.'

And Zhang's happy ending came this week when his replacement was delivered.

He said he was "satisfied" by the new doll, explaining that he "especially like[s] the head".

After dressing it up in his wife's old clothes to care for it like his late spouse, the happy customer added: "It's really not bad - it's as if I'm looking at the young her."



AsiaWire



AsiaWire



AsiaWire

He received the replacement after the original doll came apart from overuse

"Apart from the skin colour, I'm satisfied with everything about the doll. I especially like the head [and face] because it resembles the young her so much.

"I'm very grateful that [the doll-makers] have shown such compassion to this old man."

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Sex, Black Magic, Showbiz and Rocketry: The Strange Life and Death of Jack Parsons

blumhouse.com



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron

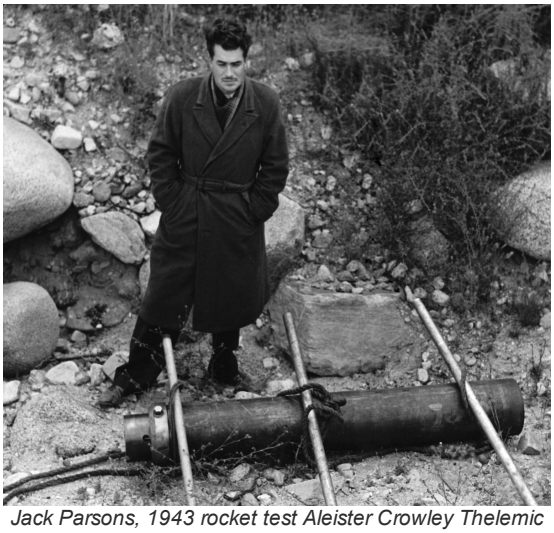
Alyse Wax

@alysewax
October 3, 2016

Few people would say that science and magick have anything to do with one another. Jack Parsons would disagree with you. Co-founder of Jet Propulsion Laboratories and father of the modern rocket, Parsons was also a devout follower of famed occultist Aleister Crowley and best friends with Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard.

Parsons was born Marvel Whiteside Parsons, named for his father, in Los Angeles in 1914. He was called Jack at home to differentiate between him and his father, but his parents divorced in 1915 so his mother Ruth took to calling him John. Professionally though, he is best known as Jack. Parsons was a bright boy, though bullied and possibly afflicted by undiagnosed dyslexia, causing him to perform poorly in school.

Inspired by his love of science fiction, Parsons began dabbling in rocket experiments in his backyard with a school friend. At around the same time, Parsons also developed an interest in the occult. According to biographer John Carter, Parsons was 13 years old when he first summoned Satan, an incident which terrified him and cemented his love for the occult.



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron

Parsons' interest in chemistry and explosions continued through his teenage years when he started working part-time at a chemicals and munition plant. He dropped out of Pasadena City College in Los Angeles, mainly due to finances, but pursued friendships with engineers and chemists in the hopes of gaining access to Caltech's labs. This worked. Despite the fact that Parsons had no formal training, his "uninhibited and fruitful imagination," paired with a fearlessness in the face of explosions, led him to invent the first composite rocket propellant and pioneer the advancement of both solid and liquid rocket fuel.

He eventually become a co-founder of Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), a federally-funded research lab that is responsible for most of NASA's deep space projects, including the Mars Rover. Space exploration was always Parsons' ultimate goal, but in the 1930s, this was ridiculed by the scientific community as science fiction.

In 1939, Parsons' friends took him to the Church of Thelema in Hollywood, where he witnessed Aleister Crowley perform a Gnostic Mass. Parsons was familiar with Crowley, a leading occultist who founded Thelema and was a leader of Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), through his copious writings. Crowley was one of the leading proponents of "religious libertarianism," and while often called a Satanist, Crowley was more appropriately a Pagan, though he did share many of the same beliefs as Satanists: radical individualism and sexually-charged rituals thought to bring about a "higher plane of consciousness."

Jack's interest in Thelemic beliefs grew, as did his friendship with Crowley. Even after Crowley returned to the UK, he mentored Jack, whom he saw as being one of his more promising acolytes. Parsons believed that the magick Crowley spoke of was real, a force that could be explained through quantum physics. His wife Helen



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron

joined him in his Pagan worship, as did her sister, Betty.

Jack and Helen formed a “commune” or what might now be called an “incubator” called the Agape Lodge, an off-shoot of Crowley’s Church of Thelema (itself an off-shoot of OTO). Filled with artists, scientists, and writers, Parsons spent his days working on rockets and his nights partaking in “sex magick.” This often consisted of drug-fueled orgies, ritual chanting, and fire dancing. Drugs and nudity were de rigeur at “The Parsonage,” so much so that neighbors reported Parsons to the authorities. (The FBI and the local police department found nothing to charge him with.) Jack began a sexual affair with Helen’s younger sister, Betty. Open relationships were encouraged by the OTO, and though Jack and Helen eventually divorced, they remained friends and all lived together in The Parsonage.

One of Jack’s best-known tenants was a science-fiction and pulp stories writer by the name of L. Ron Hubbard. Jack and Hubbard quickly became very close friends. Betty and Hubbard began sleeping together and soon their relationship became quite intense, leaving Jack out in the cold. His jealousy caused him to start partaking in black magick, which many at the Parsonage believed were bringing dark spirits into the home. There were reports of poltergeist activity, ghostly apparitions, and disembodied voices.

Parsons thought that Hubbard was “the most Thelemic person I have ever met,” and had him help in an Enochian magick spell. Jack would masturbate onto “magical” tablets and parchments while Hubbard would take notes and chant. The purpose of this ritual was to bring the goddess Babalon to Earth. Babalon was described as a “bewitching redhead” who was believed to give birth to the antichrist once on Earth.

Parsons and Hubbard went out to complete the ritual in the desert, and when they returned to the Parsonage, they met Marjorie Cameron, a red-headed illustrator who was visiting. Both Parsons and Hubbard believed her to be the incarnation of Babalon. She wasn’t into the Pagan parts of the Parsonage, but she was all about free love and plentiful drugs, so she stuck around. Parsons did eventually impregnate Cameron, but she had an abortion.

The pair were eventually married, just four days after Jack’s divorce to Helen was made official. When Cameron developed catalepsy (which caused seizures similar to epilepsy), Parsons encouraged her to manipulate her seizures to achieve astral projection. Eventually their relationship petered out and she moved to an artists’ colony in Mexico.



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron

Hubbard and Betty agreed to start a company with Parsons, which Jack funded with his life savings. The trio planned to sail around the world, but Hubbard and Betty scammed Jack and took off with the money. Hubbard and Betty tried to escape Jack on a yacht, but a squall kept them grounded. Jack attributed this to a black magick spell he cast, and the company was soon dissolved. Parsons got a few thousand dollars back, but let the matter drop when Betty threatened to bring statutory rape charges against Jack (she was underage for much of their relationship). Hubbard was already married, but he married Betty bigamously, and the pair were out of Jack's life. This whole incident caused Crowley to dismiss Parsons as a "weak fool."

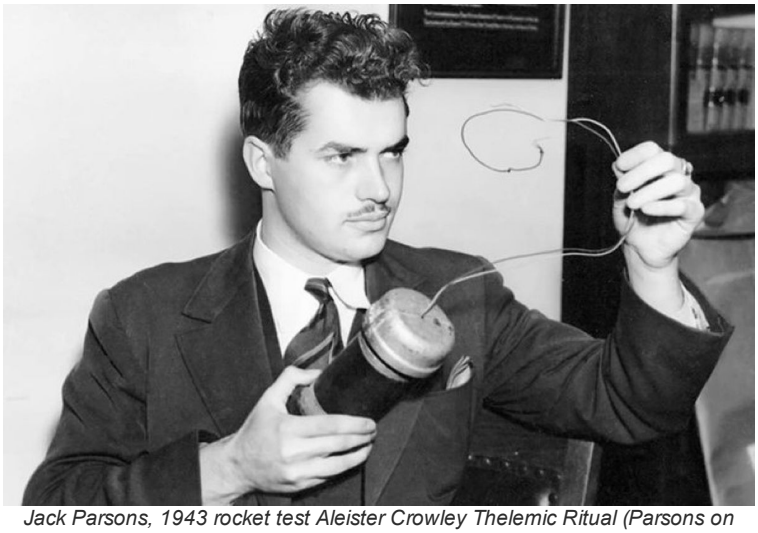
As the Cold War began, the government began cracking down on communists and potential communists. Between Jack's membership in the ACLU (then a "subversive organization"), his previous involvement with Marxists, and his current (though waning) OTO involvement caused him to lose his security clearance.

Unable to work in the government, Jack tried to go back to school so he could earn a degree and gain employment in the scientific community, but that didn't work out, either. He ended up working a number of blue-collar jobs, like auto mechanic and manual laborer in order to eke out a living. Parsons returned to his occult interests full-time and practiced sex magick with prostitutes. After Cameron returned to discover Jack was shacked up with other women, they fought violently and she returned to Mexico. He initiated divorce proceedings.

Parsons then testified that the "moral philosophy of Thelema" was anti-Communist, and he was granted clearance to return to work on classified government projects. Jack began working on designing a chemical plant for the Hughes Aircraft Company, where he met Herbert T. Rosenfeld, who offered him a job building rockets in the newly-formed State of Israel. With the Red Scare intensifying, along with the scrutiny of the FBI, Parsons decided to take Rosenfeld up on his offer. This sent up a red flag to the American government, who believed Jack was an Israeli spy and that he had transferred classified documents overseas. He was eventually found not guilty of espionage, but after learning of his occult practices and permissive lifestyle, the government still thought he was a threat and revoked his security clearance for good.

Again out of work, Parsons started his own chemical company out of his home, creating pyrotechnics and fog effects for the film industry. He reconciled with Marjorie, who moved back in with Jack, and they went back to hosting raucous parties. Jack started a new Thelemite group he called "The Witchcraft," which was a simplified version of Crowley's Thelema combined with Parsons' own Babalon prophecies.

In 1952, Jack and Marjorie decided to move to Israel. The US government had essentially killed any chance Parsons had to work in rocketry in the States, and in Israel he could return to his first love. He and Marjorie also wanted to start a family, and Jack was convinced that the FBI was keeping tabs on him. On June 17th, the day before the couple was set to leave, Marjorie left to run errands while Jack remained home to fill a rush order for a film crew. There was an explosion in the lab, which amputated his right arm, broke his left arm and both legs, and tore a hole in his face. He was rushed to the hospital, where he was declared dead. Upon hearing of her son's death, Ruth killed herself with an overdose of barbiturates.



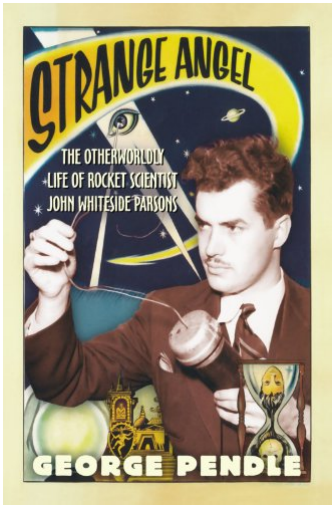
Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron



Jack Parsons, 1943 rocket test Aleister Crowley Thelemic Ritual (Parsons on right) L. Ron Hubbard, 1950 Parsons & Marjorie Cameron

The official report states that the explosion was an accident, caused when Parsons dropped fulminate of mercury on the floor, then mixed with other nearby chemicals. Some friends believed that Parsons, who was always fastidious with his laboratories, committed suicide. Others, including Cameron, believed the explosion was a set-up and Parsons was murdered by any one of a number of shadowy cabals. One friend even suggested that Jack died in the middle of one of his black magick rituals.

Whatever the cause of his death, there is no denying that Jack Parsons was an essential part of the creation of modern rocketry. Sadly, it was twenty years before Jack's scientific contributions were anything more than a footnote in his occult career. JPL was often known as Jack Parsons' Laboratory in the aeronautical industry, and in 1972 the International Astronomical Society named a crater on the moon Parsons. JPL later formally recognized Parsons for his "distinctive technical innovations that advanced early efforts in rocket engineering."



Strange Angel: The Otherworldly Life of Rocket Scientist John Whiteside Parsons

By George Pendle

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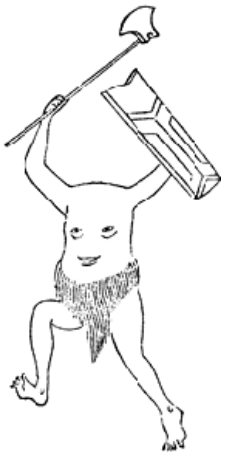
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Shan Hai Jing (x) headless giant xingtian

(Http://www.epochtimes.com)

Chi tragic death news spread south Fangtian Ting, Yan suppression could not shed two lines of tears desolate. This is Chi Yan tears to flow, but inadvertently sparked a giant ambition. It is a giant Yandi Wu Chen, loves music, has created "plow song", "Harvest words" for the Emperor's birthday. Yan Huang World War II, he left behind in the South.

Chi Jubing Northern Expedition, he was eager, only to be stopped Yandi. At the moment, I heard Chi's death, Emperor see too many cases, he could no longer contain himself sinking indignant heart, somewhere seems to voice echoed, summoning him to the north, went to the Yellow Emperor duel.

The Giants left hand holding the shield, right hand ax, quietly left the South Fangtian Ting, embarked on a road of no return. He knew that the end of the road is the end of life, but he was turning back, he wants to use the courage and blood to prove everything between heaven and earth, Yan not to be bullied, and the descendants of Yandi subordinates not to be insulted.

Giant alone traveling thousands of miles, with irresistible force, straight immediate concern central patio outside the South Gate, by name, to the Yellow Emperor singled Dudou. Yellow Emperor speculation: Yandi men, all of them difficult to tame Dior, who Riding Alone checkpoints, especially bold, if not cut tree Wei Li, surrender without fear southern Japan. He personally, dancing Kun Wu sword fighting giants. Two in the cloud Wei C ax Cross, all his life gambling skill, such as lightning sword from piercing, day whom color, ax falls like a meteor crashed to whom shaken from heaven immediate concern any community, but also kill all the way to the West often Yangshan, battle three hundred rounds, regardless of the outcome. Huangdi a time that the Giants can not win, taken the first step toward the Giants behind stare, loudly chide: "? Fab Five will not win that fellow up," Giants surprised, mind slightly loose, a little loose in the hands of a Tomahawk

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Giants did not touched neck head, heart panic, hurried down the ax, shield, bend over hand, to the ground fumble. The tall trees, towering rocks, in a pair of giant hands touch down broken, cracked, made straight

dust Fen Yang, Dan Hengfei wood. Huangdi afraid giant touched the head connected, and quickly hand from the sword down, the Yangshan often divided into two parts, then head Gu Lulu rolled within the mountain, and the mountain one.

Victorious troops to the capital of the Yellow Emperor. Explore the giant skull not pick up the ax, shield, complex to stand upright, he had a new name, called criminal days. Punishment means beheaded, meaning the day head. Xingtian reconciled, not convinced that he has enough courage, enough force, but he was accidentally cut off a conspiracy sword head. Xingtian topless, nipples as the two eyes, the navel as the mouth, his breasts seemed to emerge fiercely, his navel seems sang war songs, waving his shield, ax whirl round, and invisible enemy desperate grappling, nothing in the endless battle array.

This article taken from "Shan Hai Jing - a modern version of" (Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House - line with Chapter)

(http://www.dajiyuan.com)

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Sharks are helping the Philippines recover from a typhoon

By Harriet Constable 8 November 2016

bbc.com

BBC Three years ago, the Philippines was devastated by Typhoon Haiyan. In one corner of the country, the people have found a surprising way to recover



A pelagic thresher shark (Alopias pelagicus) (Credit: Steve De Neef)

At dawn on Friday 8 November 2013, exactly three years ago, the Philippines was struck by the deadliest typhoon in its history: Typhoon Haiyan.

The first point of impact was the eastern province of Guiuan. From there the 370-mile-wide storm travelled west across the country, devastating its picture-perfect islands before moving on to Vietnam and Laos.

As the 195mph winds struck the shore, palm trees crunched into two, buildings were ripped apart, and cars were swept up and piled on top of one another. Over the course of the next 48 hours, more than a million homes were destroyed and more than 6,000 people were killed.

In the days that followed, journalists reported scenes of utter devastation: splinters of wood and glass were smashed all over the ground, and debris littered the once-pristine beaches. Images went viral of children walking over rubble, and of hand-painted signs stacked up saying, "Help us!" and "We need water, food, shelter". Everywhere, lives and livelihoods had been reduced to dust.

Malapascua, a small island resort that lay right in Haiyan's path, was particularly hard-hit. Buildings were flattened, fishing boats annihilated, and all power and communications lost. To most, it seemed that this once-popular tourist destination was finished. But all hope was not lost: Malapascua still had its thresher sharks.

Malapascua in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan (Credit: Steve De Neef)

Thresher sharks are long-tailed creatures that use their tails as whips to stun other fish, making them easier to catch.

> Early in the morning some of them come close to shore to avail the services of the cleaner wrasses

There are at least three species, all in the genus *Alopias*: pelagic thresher sharks, which are found in Malapascua; bigeyes, found in tropical oceans across the globe; and common thresher sharks, which prefer cooler waters. The Philippines' pelagic threshers can be distinguished by the dark



Malapascua in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan (Credit: Steve De Neef)

shading over the base of the pectoral fins. They are also the smallest of the three species, only reaching around 10ft (3m) long when fully grown.

All three species of thresher shark are highly migratory, and are found both in high seas and shore waters. They only reproduce slowly, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Pelagic threshers produce just two offspring a year and do not reach sexual maturity until they are around 8 years old.

Every day, pelagic thresher sharks head to Monad Shoal, a sunken island just off the coast of Malapascua. They have chosen this spot for a good reason, says Alessandro Ponzo, executive director of the Large Marine Vertebrates Project Philippines.



A pelagic thresher shark (Alopias pelagicus) (Credit: Steve De Neef)

"Thresher sharks, like all other wild species, host a number of external parasites," says Ponzo. "To get rid of them, early in the morning some of them come close to shore to avail the services of the cleaner wrasses [small fish] at several cleaning stations that can be found around Monad Shoal."

These "cleaning stations" lie along the rocky edge of the sea mount. "The sharks approach the area and hover to allow the fishes to remove the parasites from [their] bodies," he says.

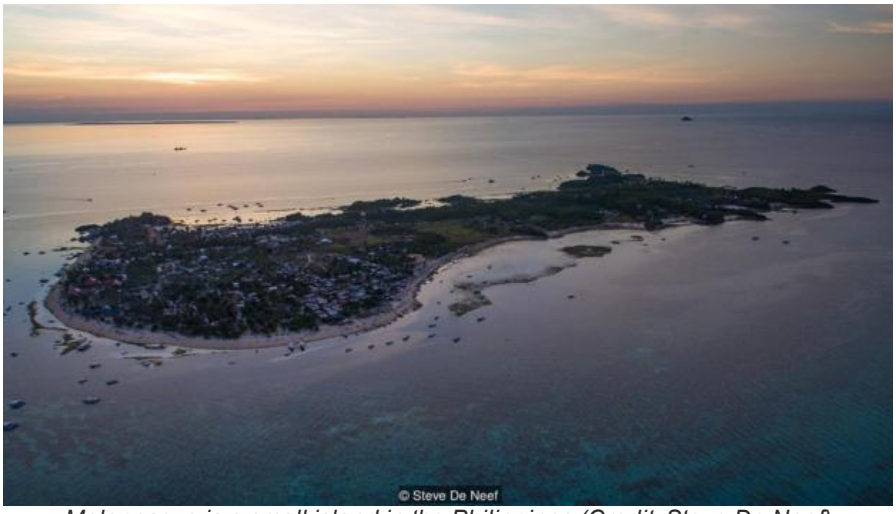
Thresher shark tourism was in full swing within weeks

The shoal is also surrounded by deep water filled with sardines. That means the sharks, which spend the daytime in the dark water, can hunt and feed.

Divers have been coming to the region since 1999 to witness this natural marvel for themselves. Each morning the divers wait on the sea mount edge, 66ft (20m) below the surface, for the sharks to approach.

"There are no cages or baiting involved in our thresher shark tourism," says Anna Oposa, co-founder of campaign group Save Philippine Seas. "The sharks are there because they come to clean themselves on the reef every day."

Oposa says the thresher sharks have been fundamental in helping Malapascua to recover from Typhoon Haiyan.



Malapascua is a small island in the Philippines (Credit: Steve De Neef)

Malapascua is a small island in the Philippines (Credit: Steve De Neef)

"Thresher shark tourism helped rebuild the island for two reasons," says Oposa. "One, because… past and present tourists love Malapascua and its people so much, a lot of help came in – and two, the sharks were not affected by the storm, so thresher shark tourism was in full swing within weeks, which brought income to the island."

When I returned to Malapascua a few days after Haiyan, I didn't recognise it

Steve De Neef is a photojournalist who lived in the Philippines and travelled extensively across the country in the aftermath of Haiyan to document the devastation. "Two days after the typhoon, some of the locals went out on one of the only boats that was still working to check on Monad Shoal and assess the damage," he says. "Luckily the shoal didn't receive extensive damage and the sharks were still around."

After two weeks, shark tourism was back in business. At first, divers cancelled their trips, but when word got out that the diving was up and running again, the divers returned. "[They] actually went very early on to dive at Monad Shoal, without the regular crowd, so they would have the thresher sharks to themselves," says De Neef.

Thanks to its ecotourism industry, Malapascua has been almost entirely restored.



Dennis Bait-it is a diving instructor in Malapascua (Credit: Steve De Neef)

Dennis Bait-it is a diving instructor in Malapascua (Credit: Steve De Neef)

"When I returned to Malapascua a few days after Haiyan, I didn't recognise it," says Oposa. "It looked like a giant stepped on it. I remember getting lost many times because the landmarks were gone, like little huts or structures."

Three years on, the devastation is virtually gone.

For me thresher sharks are a gift to Malapascua

"It's almost back to normal," says Oposa. "Houses, resorts, and dive shops have been rebuilt. Some locals have said that their homes are now stronger… because of the aid that came in. We're still

rebuilding one structure in the elementary school, but many houses have been rebuilt, and all dive shops have been rebuilt as well."

Locals are well aware of the central role thresher shark tourism has played in maintaining their livelihoods.

Dennis Bait-it is a dive instructor in Malapascua and a member of Project Sharklink, which provides training and information on the benefits of shark conservation tourism. "I get my income from the thresher sharks, as do most of the locals on the island," he says. "There are shark dive managers who started off as fishermen… people are happy because their children can go to school, finish and become dive instructors."

"It's incredible how much the lives of people [on the island] are related to the threshers," says Oposa. "When you walk there you see [the sharks] in paintings, murals, the signs over every dive shop."



Shark souvenirs are big business on Malapascua (Credit: Steve De Neef)

Shark souvenirs are big business on Malapascua (Credit: Steve De Neef)

Local souvenir shop owner Bryan Barcenas crafts sculptures of the sharks out of wood to sell to tourists. "[The sharks are important] in Malapascua because they provide a lot of work to people here," he says. "It's good business for me because [after the tourists have done their diving] they come and buy a wooden thresher shark. For me thresher sharks are a gift to Malapascua."

> Thresher shark fins represent about 2.3% of the fins bought and sold annually in Hong Kong

Former fisherman Renato Reuyan has also rebuilt his life using his thresher shark business. Until recently he hunted the sharks to supply the huge shark fin market in Asia, but has since turned to protecting them.

"Before, sharks meant nothing to us," says Reuyan. "When we caught a shark we would be happy, and in one night of fishing I could catch five to 10 sharks."

He does not do that any more. "[Once I realised] it is important to protect the island, I became a dive guide," he says. "Now, if there are no more sharks and then I don't have any income, my family would go hungry. More sharks mean more divers, which means more income."

Sadly, despite the enthusiasm of the people in Malapascua, thresher shark tourism still faces serious challenges.

Thresher sharks are still being fished (Credit: Steve De Neef)



Thresher sharks are still being fished (Credit: Steve De Neef)

"Thresher sharks are seen in other areas of the Philippines, but illegal and commercial fishing is taking away [tourism] opportunities from these regions," says Oposa.

Thresher shark fins represent about 2.3% of the fins bought and sold annually in Hong Kong, the largest market for shark fins, according to a 2006 study published in *Conservation Biology*. This equates to millions of thresher sharks killed every year.

Before, sharks meant nothing to us

"[Illegal fishing] is a constant threat when there are commercial fishing boats fishing nearby," says Bait-it. "We have a group of men who patrol the shoal 24/7 to shoo [them] away."

"Sharks are facing a global mortality crisis, with 100 million killed every year," says Luke Warwick, director of Global Shark Conservation at the Pew Charitable Trusts. "Thresher sharks can take over 10 years to mature and bear pups, with threshers only having one or two pups every other year. Add to that the unsustainable declines these species are facing, at least 70% everywhere they are found… and these sharks are headed toward extinction."

Nevertheless, Bait-it and his team are doing all they can to encourage tourists to visit Malapascua and protect the sharks. He believes the positive impact of thresher shark tourism extends right across the country. "From Manila, it's a one-hour flight and then a land trip, then a boat [to get to the island]," he says. "If people come all the way here, they'll go elsewhere too. The rest of the Philippines also benefits."

The thresher sharks could yet continue to help the Philippines recover after Typhoon Haiyan, by thrilling scuba divers day after day. But only if they are alive for the tourists to marvel at.

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Zoo visitor who wrestled with panda was 'showing off to his girlfriend'

11:56, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 12:10, 1 Nov 2016 By Laura Connor

mirror.co.uk



Extraordinary footage shows zoo visitor sneak into panda enclosure and wrestle a BEAR

A zoo visitor filmed wrestling with a panda in the bear's enclosure was reportedly showing off in front of his girlfriend.

The man had been touring Nanchang Zoo in China's Jiangxi province when he let himself into the panda house.

At first, the footage seems to show the pair playing around and the tourist doesn't seem too alarmed by the encounter after he wakes up the sleeping panda.

But amusement quickly turns into panic when the panda wrestles him to the ground and he struggles to free from his strong grip.



Extraordinary footage shows zoo visitor sneak into panda enclosure and then wrestle a bear



The terrifying encounter
The tourist woke up the sleeping bear

He eventually manages to escape, running away from the bear and fleeing the enclosure.

The man was reportedly having a tour of the zoo with two female friends before climbing into the panda house.

He has now said he was trying to show off by teasing the animal.

The disturbed panda was at first seen on the zoo's CCTV footage hugging the man's leg before sitting on him.

He was later given a medically assessment but amazingly escaped unharmed.

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Extraordinary footage shows zoo visitor sneak into panda enclosure and then wrestle a bear



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Frilly undies that Eva Braun wore for lover Hitler are up for sale

15:20, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 15:21, 1 Nov 2016 By Louie Smith

mirror.co.uk



Philip Serrell Auctions

These frilly knickers were found by an American serviceman in an abandoned bunker next to Hitler's home in the Bavarian Alps

A pair of silk frilly knickers worn by Adolf Hitler 's mistress Eva Braun is being sold at auction.

The lilac undies, which have Braun's initials on the front, were found by an American serviceman in an abandoned bunker next to Hitler's Berghof home in the Bavarian Alps.

The soldier took them back to the US after the Second World War and changed hands twice before they were bought by a British collector.

Auctioneer Sophie Jones said: "All of these items belong to a British collector who has had them for many years.

"The undergarments have signs of use but there are no holes and are very clean.

"They are a very pale lilac and have faded with age. There is a market for this sort of thing and it will be very interesting to see who they end up selling to."

The 1940s pants, which have a white lace and ribbon trim, were discovered in a hotel bunker near Hitler's home in the Bavarian Alps.



Getty

Eva Braun was Hitler's mistress for years before she finally married him just hours before they died

They will be sold this week for an estimated £450 at an auction in Malvern, Worcs.

The same collector is also selling a red lipstick that also once belonged to Braun, again bearing the initials 'EB'.

The lipstick is in a silver rectangular case decorated with flowers and leaves and has a small mirror on the inside of the lid.

The lipstick itself has remained untouched for more than 70 years.

A gold cluster ring that also belonged to Braun and pocketed by the US soldier is being sold as well.

The ring is set with an opal surrounded by six rubies and is valued at £300.

Two silver oval dressing table boxes, a silver jug and silver mounted pendant that all have the initials of EB engraved on them are also being sold at the same auction.



Getty

Eva stands next to Hitler in his full Nazi regalia

The ring and the underwear are thought to have been taken shortly after Braun and Hitler committed suicide after marrying in the dictator's bunker in Berlin at the end of the war.

Eva Braun met Hitler in 1929 when she was 17 and he was 40, and became his lover.

By 1936 she was part of his household, but did not attend official events with him.

In early April 1945 she married Hitler and shortly before they both committed suicide, her by cyanide and him by a gunshot to the head.

The sale takes place on Thursday.

DailyMirror

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PROOF OF GHOSTS? Sinister apparition photographed outside abandoned orphanage

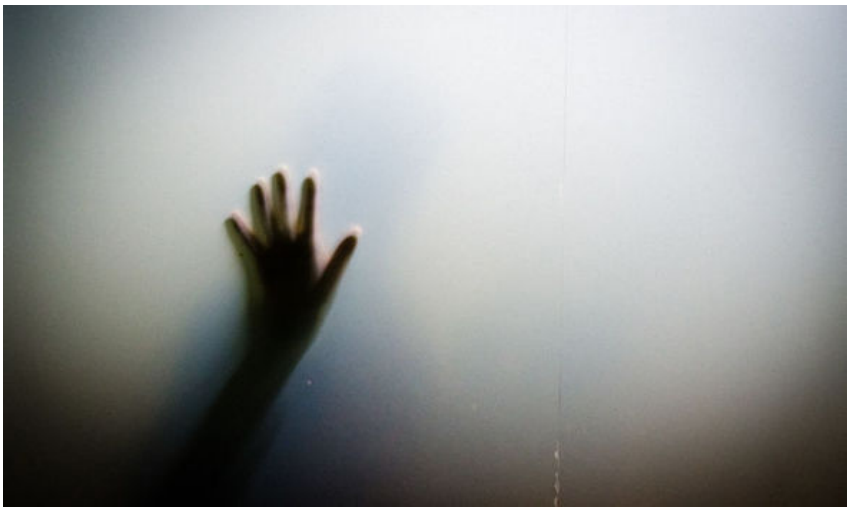
express.co.uk

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A WOMAN was left terrified after she spotted a ghostly apparition in a photo of an old orphanage.

By Sean Martin

PUBLISHED: 14:57, Fri, Sep 23, 2016 | UPDATED: 15:07, Fri, Sep 23, 2016



GETTY

Heather Size, from Kirkby in Merseyside, got more than she bargained for when she stopped to take a snap of a century-and-a-half old asylum.

When Ms Size arrived at the abandoned Newsham Park Hospital in Liverpool for a ghost tour with her friends, she decided to get a picture of the building.

At first everything seemed normal, but it wasn't until she later checked back on the photo that she saw what seemed to be a ghost running in front of the building.

The 20-year old told The Liverpool Echo: "I'd booked a tour of Newsham Park Hospital for my friend's 21st birthday as she's always wanted to do it.



Liverpool Echo/Heather Size

"I didn't know where it was so my mum drove me there and I took the picture to show my friend so that she'd be scared.

"I couldn't believe it when I looked back and there was what looked like someone running past. I already believed in ghosts but now I believe even more so, and I'm really scared.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

"[The figure] definitely wasn't there when I took the photo."

While Ms Size has met inevitable skepticism, she states that the picture is 100 per cent authentic.

She continued: "I know what I saw but some of my friends thought it may have been an app that I had on my phone - but it's not. I took the picture and there was no-one jogging

past when I took it."

The Newsham Park Hospital, a Grade II listed building, was first opened in 1874 and originally intended to be an orphanage for seamen's children.

Some 80 years later, it was transformed into a hospital with a focus on helping those who suffered from severe mental illnesses.

It finally closed down in 1992 and is now used for many ghost tours, with its abandoned corridors full of old beds and an attic with a row of cupboards used to lock naughty children in.

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Oct 19, 2016 @ 02:15 PM

Skeleton Of Medieval Giantess Unearthed From Polish Cemetery

Kristina Killgrove



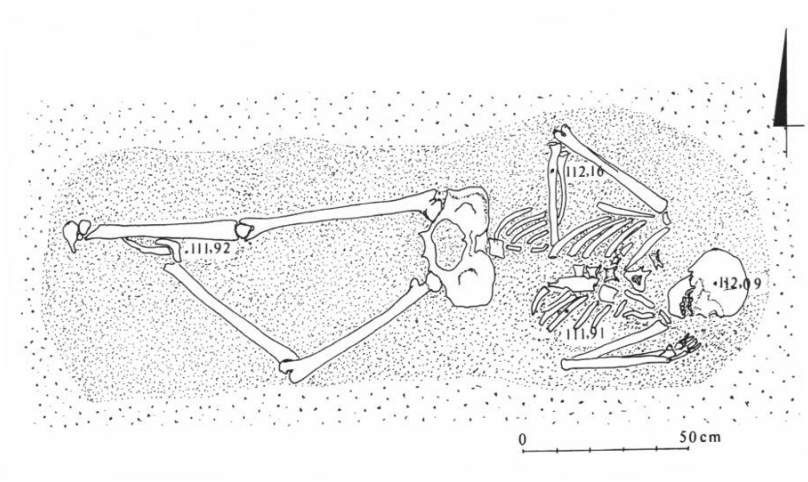
Skull of a woman with gigantism from grave 23/77, Ostrów Lednicki, Poland. (Image by M. Jóźwikowska, first published by Judyta Julia Gładykowska-Rzeczycka, Anna Wrzesińska, and Anna Sokół, used with permission.)

Just outside of the Medieval church of the Ostrów Lednicki stronghold in Poland, archaeologists have unearthed the strange burial of a giantess. The woman's skeleton showed that she reached a towering height of 7'2″ but also that her short life was full of traumatic injuries and disease.

The giantess was found in a cemetery that was once used solely by the elite of the area: dignitaries, the very wealthy, and people connected with Bolesław the Brave, the king of Poland in the early 11th century, and with the local Piast ruling dynasty. By the late 12th century, though, the cemetery saw more and more burials of commoners, with over 2,500 skeletons recovered at the site of Ostrów Lednicki Island.

But in spite of the elite nature of the cemetery, its most famous resident is a woman from a lower social class who died in her late 20s. Writing recently in the book *New Developments in the Bioarchaeology of Care*, archaeologists Magdalena Matczak and Tomasz Kozłowski detail the intriguing skeleton and the odd nature of the grave.

While all other burials are made with the head to the west, this woman's head faces east. There were no artifacts at all present with her body. Even the positioning of her body is strange, sloping at an angle with her left hand close to her skull, and right arm and left leg bent instead of extended.



Burial of a woman with gigantism in the Ostrów Lednicki cemetery, Poland. (Figure by Janusz Górecki, used with permission.)

The most impressive thing about the woman, though, is her height — 215.5 cm or 7'2″. Her bones are normally proportioned — just very, very large — meaning she almost certainly suffered from gigantism, which is when the pituitary gland over-produces growth hormone and causes people to grow to between 7 and 9 feet tall. She also suffered from acromegaly, which has a similar cause but which occurs after the growth plates of the bones have closed, making the bones of the head larger.

People with gigantism and acromegaly are well-known throughout history, owing to the fact that it's difficult not to notice them. You've probably heard of André the Giant, either through his professional

wrestling career or because of his role as Fezzik in the classic movie *The Princess Bride*. André's physical characteristics were caused by both gigantism and acromegaly. Women with gigantism and acromegaly are not as well known, though. Perhaps the most famous is Anna Swan, a 19th century Canadian woman who stood close to 8′ tall, and who married Martin van Buren Bates, the "Kentucky Giant". Their second child, a boy who lived for only 11 hours, was over 23 pounds at birth.



Left: André the Giant in the late 1980s (Image by Flickr user John McKeon, used under a CC-BY-SA 2.0 license.) Right: Anna Swan with her parents around 1860 (public domain image from Collections Canada).

This Medieval Polish woman had other hallmarks of gigantism and acromegaly — according to Matczak and Kozłowski, her spine showed evidence of degenerative joint disease, with disc herniations throughout, probably as a result of her height and body weight. She had broken her right upper arm and left lower leg at some point in her life, and these can also be attributed to her condition because it affects bone mineral density and results in weak bones. Additionally, small nodes on her ribs suggest she suffered from pleurisy, a lung inflammation.

Gigantism and acromegaly are also commonly associated with diabetes, hypertension, headaches, sleep apnea, skin changes, swelling of the tongue and, in females, menstrual dysfunction and psychiatric problems. These issues don't leave marks on the bone, of course, but Matczak and Kozłowski write that "given the correlation between acromegaly and mental disorders, and gigantism and intellectual impairment, it is possible that the woman with gigantism from Ostrów Lednicki suffered from mental or cognitive dysfunction."

The combination of skeletal trauma and potential psychological issues meant that this Medieval Polish woman likely needed at least occasional support from her friends, family or community. At the very least, her leg fracture — which was well healed at her death — meant she was resting and recuperating for several months, presumably while someone else helped care for her.

Matczak and Kozłowski add up the skeletal and burial evidence to conclude that "during her lifetime, she may have been subject to different treatment by her community because of her physical abnormalities and/or possible psychological or cognitive problems. However, her survival to middle adulthood, together with evidence indicating she likely received health-related care, suggests that she was not rejected by her society."

Prior to the 19th century, gigantism was not well known, which makes this Polish giantess quite intriguing. Francesco Galassi, who has studied gigantism and acromegaly from both a medical and palaeopathological perspective, told me that this find "expands our limited knowledge of the evolution of the morphology of these two incapacitating and stigmatizing conditions." Galassi noted that he would like to see genetic analyses undertaken on this skeleton — and other ancient skeletons around the world with the same conditions — "to better elucidate the pathophysiology of these complex endocrine disorders."

The giantess is not the only Medieval Polish skeleton that belonged to someone a little bit different than the rest of the population. A person with achondroplasia (dwarfism) has also been found at

Ostrów Lednicki, and a woman with leprosy was discovered in nearby Kałdus. Although some of these burials are slightly different in form or orientation, they were all made among others in their community and were therefore not seen as misfits or outcasts.

Matczak and Kozłowski conclude their essay by noting that their aim is to “present a wider view of aspects of life in medieval society, including care, emotion, social perception, status of the diseased and the disabled, and the meaning of burial ritual.” Using archaeological and biological evidence, they have shown how a visibly different person may have experienced life and trauma more than six centuries ago.

Kristina Killgrove is a bioarchaeologist at the University of West Florida. For more osteology news, follow her on Twitter (@DrKillgrove) or like her Facebook page Powered by Osteons.

Oct 20, 2016 @ 07:30 PM

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Skeletons found at Terror on the Fox

Kendra Meinert , USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

greenbaypressgazette.com

Skeletons found at Terror on the Fox



Skeleton

Human skeletons believed to date to the 19th century were found in storage at Terror on the Fox this season. The caskets were donated by a local funeral home about five years ago.(Photo: Courtesy of Terror on the Fox)

ASHWAUBENON - Talk about your skeletons in the closet.

The crew at Terror on the Fox got a scare of its own this Halloween season when it was digging through its storage area and came across bones — human bones.

Two full skeletons were discovered in antique caskets that had been donated about five years ago, said Mike Krausert, senior project manager for the haunted attraction in its 20th year on the grounds of the National Railroad Museum.

The funeral home that donated the coffins had told the Terror on the Fox owner at the time there was a skeleton in one, but not thinking much of it (strange items get donated all the time), he simply had them put in storage. The other skeleton had been used by the haunted house years ago and was being conveniently stored in another.

Both were a surprise to the scenic designer who found them and to Krausert, who sold his share in Terror on the Fox seven years ago but returned this year to helm the haunted house after buying out his former partner.

During reconstruction of a new catacombs area in the Dead House portion of the attraction, a designer went in search of as many bones as she could find. She was thrilled to find the two skeletons in the caskets. It wasn't until she took them out and got a closer look that she realized they didn't look like fake bones — something Terror on the Fox has an impressive inventory of.

That's when she put the skeletons down and called up Krausert, who knows a thing or two about bones from his career in the haunt industry.

"We're around bones enough, like deer skulls and cow skulls and bones, that you can definitely tell the difference between real and fake. You can tell very easily actually," he said. "Honestly, human skeletons are very lightweight. The bones aren't that heavy. Fake ones, because they're just solid resin or plastic, are very heavy."

After researching further, he's certain they're medical skeletons. The hardware on them indicates they were put back together to be used for educational purposes, he said. The hardware and the vintage toe-pincher style of the caskets suggests late 19th century, Krausert said.

Both skeletons are part of the Dead House's catacombs scene, where visitors can see them but wire prevents any touching.

"Legally, if you can prove where they came from, you're OK to have them and use them. We made sure everything was right in line with what we were able to do or not do," Krausert said. "We're being very respectful and handling them properly. We're not screwing screws through them to put them in a wall."

As creepy as it may sound for a funeral home to have extra skeletons hanging around, Krausert said it's not uncommon for people who come across a medical skeleton, not knowing what else to do, to take it to a funeral home to get it off their hands.

Human skeletons were found in antique toe-pincher caskets that had been in storage for about five years at Terror on the Fox. A local funeral home had donated the coffins.



(Photo: Courtesy of Terror on the Fox)

The fate of the skeletons after Terror on the Fox, a joint project of Thirteenth Floor Entertainment Group, Green Bay Preble Optimist Club and the National Railroad Museum, wraps up its milestone season on Nov. 5 is still to be determined.

“We’re definitely talking about what our options are and what we should do with them. Again, we want to be respectful and we want to make sure these are handled properly. I don’t think sitting in storage for five or six years should have been done with them to begin with,” Krausert said. “Now that we know they’re here, we’re going to meet after the season ... and figure out what to do with them, whether we keep them or donate them.”

Krausert said they plan to refinish the caskets, which are banged up but have beautiful woodwork.

Real skeletons turning up at a haunted house just in time for Halloween? You have to admit that’s some rather freaky good timing.

“A lot of people think it’s a hoax, but it absolutely is not,” said Krausert, who also wants to set the record straight on one other point. As seriously as Terror on the Fox takes scaring people, it’s not going around digging up bones in the name of entertainment.

“Nobody dug up anything,” he said. “That’s very illegal, and we would probably be arrested if we did that. Nobody did anything like that.”

kmeinert@pressgazettemedia.com and follow her on Twitter @KendraMeinert

If you dare

What: Terror on the Fox

When: 7-10:30 p.m. Thursday and Sunday, 7-11:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Monday

Where: National Railroad Museum, 2285 S. Broadway, Ashwaubenon

Tickets: $25; terroronthefox.com

Blackout: Nov. 4-5. All lights are turned off, and groups are given one glow stick to try to find their way out of the Dead House, often getting lost and separated in the process. Tickets limited nightly do to the longer participation time. Not recommended for ages 12 and younger. $25.

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The Skull at the Pack Horse Pub, Affetside

lancashirefolk.com

Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history
Posted on August 25, 2016 by LancashireFolk



Pack Horse Inn, Affetside

Strictly speaking, the Pack Horse in Affetside is in Greater Manchester now, but historically this whole area used to be part of Lancashire…

Built in 1443, this old pub is proud of the skull displayed above the bar. The skull is brown with age and indisputably human. It is also indisputably ancient. It is said to belong to George Whowell, and its story dates from the Civil War. However, unlike the majority of preserved skulls in Lancashire, its owner George was no religious martyr; he was a simple man whose tragedy was to witness the murder of his wife and children. Their murderers were Royalist soldiers, in the charge of James Stanley, the seventh Earl of Derby. George's family were among over a thousand people killed in the Bolton Massacre. Stanley, Earl of Derby was later captured by Cromwell's soldiers and sentenced to death for the crime of supporting the 'pretender' to the throne, Charles II. He was executed in 1651, in Bolton and, fittingly, his executioner was the local 'headsman' – none other than George Whowell.

No-one can say for certain how Whowell's skull came to be preserved and kept at the Pack Horse pub, although it seems horrifyingly fitting that a 'headsman' should be remembered this way.

There is evidence that he may have been connected to a local farming family by the name of Butterworth, who later came to own the pub. Or perhaps it was simply one of his favourite watering places. However, the skull, whoever it belongs to, will surely be there forever, as rumour has it that if anyone tries to remove it, it screams…

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Lancashire folklore, legends, ghosts, local history - author of 'Lancashire Folk' published by Schiffer Publishing Winter 2015 - 9780764349836 £17.50. 'Manchester Folk', covering Greater Manchester, coming in 2017!
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Man sells dead people for a living

01/10/2016 news.com.au

Ben Lovatt sells dead people and animals for a living

October 1, 20169:47pm



Ben Lovatt owns the SkullStore Oddity Shop. Picture: Facebook

ON A quaint street in Toronto, bordered with flower boxes and lamp posts, is a store unlike the rest.

The blinds are drawn closed and it appears to be dark and deserted, but inside its shelves are littered with skulls and even human brains.

The SkullStore Oddity Shop is owned by morbid mastermind Ben Lovatt, who sells parts of dead humans, and people are actually buying them.

One of his most popular items was a shrunken head of a child, which was ticketed at $25,000. It's sold out.

Mr Lovatt may sound ghoulish and gruesome but he told news.com.au selling human parts was never part of his plan.

He started out running an exotic animal rescue and wanted to preserve some of the rare species he came across once they died.

He then began performing taxidermy on animals that would die from natural causes, so people could get the "trophy" without hunting and poaching the animals.

That led to his curiosity in selling human parts.

"Out of the thousands of items we have carried, the human body parts definitely stand out," Mr Lovatt said.

"Our human parts come from a few different places but all human specimens can be summed up in two categories.

"Medical skulls, typically bleached white and potentially with a hinged jaw, are usually specimens that had their origins as a teaching tool or were sold to art and medical students by their schools. Anthropological human remains are a bit more complicated. In some instances you could be dealing skulls or trophies taken during tribal warfare, dating up to centuries old."

A shrunken head of a child sold by the SkullStore. Picture: Skullstore.ca*Source:*Supplied

So why would anybody want to spend thousands on a human skull?

Mr Lovatt said they had shown real human skulls to tens of thousands of people from across the world, all were more interested than disgusted.

"When you gaze into a human skull you are gazing into yourself. Our hopes, our dreams and our very identity dwell within this thin cradle of bone," Mr Lovatt said.

"A human skull can serve as a grim reminder of our mortality but in doing so it also gains the power to symbolise the beauty and significance of life as well."



A shrunken head of a child sold by the SkullStore. Picture: Skullstore.ca

According to his website, the shrunken heads were crafted by the Shuar people from Ecuador.

They traditionally use severed, shrunken heads for trophies, rituals or trade purposes.

Mr Lovatt has had in his possession body parts that would make many squirmish and even he admitted to it feeling a little twisted at times.

“The first time I acquired a human skull it did creep me out a bit but I got used to working with remains as time went on,” he told Reddit.

“I am currently selling samples of human brain (and sold a complete brain). It was an interesting experience holding a brain.”



Ben Lovatt has previously sold human brains. Picture: Facebook

Ben Lovatt has previously sold human brains. Picture: Facebook*Source:*Facebook

Mr Lovatt, also the director of the Prehistoria Natural History Centre, said his line of work could be dangerous and sometimes dealt with dodgy buyers.

“Conservation and sustainability are the principles I founded my business on, which leads me into all sorts of confrontations against poachers and smugglers and people who simply don’t care about the lives of animals, only the dollar figures attached to their corpses,” he said.

There is even a bounty on his head in Cameroon, a country in Central Africa, because of a confrontation with a dealer.

“I was offered some poached gorillas, chimps, and mandrills but the guy claimed they were legally hunted by Aboriginal people. I contacted the Canadian government asking if such exemptions did exist and they confirmed it was bulls**t,” Mr Lovatt said.

He assumed it was a “send me money and I promise you’ll get a parcel scam” and when Mr Lovatt confronted the dealer, he said he would ship the parcel and Mr Lovatt could pay on arrival.

“I had it flagged at the border and it was a pair of mandrill skulls blasted apart from gunfire. I refused to pay, it would have been a major crime, and handed the items to the Canadian officials,” he said.

“That’s when the death threats came in.”

A human skull is sold at a store in Canada. Picture: Facebook*Source:*Facebook

Despite the serious side of his profession, Mr Lovatt has also met his fair share of quirky people.

“Some guy had accidentally cut off his finger doing woodworking in his garage. He found it a few days later while tripping out on painkillers and tried to sell it to me for beer money. I declined,” he said.

“I also refused to do a refund once.

“A woman bought a human femur online and called to confirm the address. Two weeks later I got a notification from Visa, I had run a fraudulent order and that they were taking back the funds. I contested with proof that she did legitimately make the purchase.



A human skull is sold at a store in Canada. Picture: Facebook

“They deemed I was in the right so the next day she calls me demanding I come to her property and pick up the bone in person immediately. She wasn’t even in the same country. I asked what the problem was and she said she’d used the bone to cast a spell and the spirit wasn’t the one she tried to reach. Apparently this angry spirit was now haunting her barn so it was my responsibility to send somebody to her barn to remove the bone and haunting.”

Mr Lovatt said skulls were just something that always made people curious, evident from the pages of Hamlet to the eyes of the children who saw them for the first time.

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Slainte! The histories and folklore of ales and beers in Celtic lands

Updated on September 21, 2016
5 weeks ago from Cape Town, South Africa

hubpages.com



The Highlander Scottish Pub (I know)

The Highlander Scottish Pub (I know)

"The Irish are born thirsty." – Augustus Mayhew (1865)

"Ag *sgagadh leanna!"—Irish ale song*

When I speak of beer vs. ale, I typically do so with the modern brewing definitions of where fermentation occurs. Beer is a catch-all for lagers (bottom fermentation) and ales (top fermentation). I tend to differentiate, because I very much enjoy ales more and are a result of the United States' craft brewing boom, as opposed to the more mass produced lagers. I cast no judgement. I simply prefer one over the other. I'm a beer geek, not a beer snob.

However, brewing history teaches us that it has nothing to do with fermentation. Beer was the product of water, barley, and yeast. Ale was the product that had those, plus herbs and spices for medicinal, flavor, and preservation reasons. Honey is another ingredient that adds a layer of complexity best saved for another day. Adding another layer of complexity are the stouts, where in Ireland and Britain, they were considered an altogether different drink than ale or beer. Even up into the 20th century, the comparative virtues were considered, between bottled and draft, as well as age, and even the preferred drink of each gender (Mr. Ladd, writing to the Beamish brewing company, extolled that their extra stout was much too strong for women, needing it topped off with a smaller ale first).


Irish gents enjoying a drink and pipe

Irish gents enjoying a drink and pipe

Ireland

Barley was the chief grain the ancient Irish used for their ales, but there are remnants of pots that show rye, wheat, and oats were also used. The larger houses even had a man whose job it was to strain ale for guests, and would sing as they did so: "*ag sgagadh leanna*" or "*a-straining ale*!"

Nettles, being an easy to come by ingredient, were used for brewing beer in Ireland, not only for flavor, but for easy access during times of famine and also as a cure for scurvy. Nettle tea is still brewed in Ireland, and a wonderful recipe is given by famed chef Darina Allen.

Brehon Laws have much to discuss about ale, including the necessity of a king to maintain an army and an inebriating ale house, and must always have a vat of milk and a vat of ale on hand. The king does get aid from such laws, though, as he is to have ale supplied to him with his food. The king was also to have his own brewer, who in turn was obligated to have a cauldron that never ran dry

and dwelt on a public road, where all travelers were welcome, and was to be open 24 hours a day. There were also fully certified brewers, which were the professionals, even if many others knew how and were allowed to brew. If the ale made by non-certified brewers turned out to be of poor quality, though, and a certified brewer, or *scoaire*, was held completely blameless if he/she followed all of the appropriate steps, from malting through brewing.

The ancient Ulster warriors were much fond of their drink, for after battles they would sit around fires and consume large quantities of ale, though were happy drunks and cheerful for the night. Irish myths include lore on this need for brewing, with Conchobar Mac Nessa going on a quest to gain the great bronze boiler *Daradach*, much as Thor did in Norse legends, when he took they giant Hymir's boiler. It was also stated that no one could become king or Eire (Ireland) unless he drank of the island's beer: "He shall not be king over Eriu unless he drink the Ale of Cualand" and of Flaths and Ferna and Cerna and Ele and Frlochra Ardda and Dorind. You get the idea.

Even Saint Brigid spoke lovingly of the ale she would expect in heaven, with all of heaven drinking it through eternity. In a country where, in the late 1600s, it was estimated 180,000 people were in the brewing business on an island with 200,000 families, this seems quite appropriate to me! Religiously, laws were passed to ensure a good Mass – it was set down that a layman (non-clergy) may drink six pints of ale at dinner, but a monk may only drink three, in order to be sober for prayer time!

More recently, Irish pubs were also storage places for the dead, because of the cool cellars. Autopsies were even performed there. The Coroners Act of 1846, which enabled this, was still on the books until 1962, but still sometimes occurs.



The Cluricaune (TC Croker)

The Cluricaune (TC Croker) | Source

Warning! Beware the Clurichaun! This Irish fairy drinks heavily at night, once his chores are finished for the day. He also drinks before the day's chores, in order to maintain a very nice level of inebriation throughout the day. Treat them well and they will guard your beer/wine cellar. Mistreat them or steal from their cellar, and you'll be hounded and tricked and tormented beyond compare! If you're lucky, though, he'll be too busy riding dogs around the town.

One of Ireland's ancient gods, Goibniu furnished the feasts and drinks for the other deities, both in this world and the Otherworld, where the feast was called Fled Goibhnenn. He also brewed the special ale that would give the gift of immortality to those who drank it. Modern Celts may know him better as Gobban Saer (Gobban the Joiner), who builds churches.

The author enjoying a Belhaven (Scotland) Twisted Thistle pale ale.

Scotland

The Scots diet at the end of the 1500s is said to contain ale and Gascony wines as the main drinks, but that mead, cider, and perry (pear cider) were not uncommon. Hops were scarce and so rarely used in ales.



The author enjoying a Belhaven (Scotland) Twisted Thistle pale ale.

A truly Highland drink was birch beer. Birch sap would be collected in the spring and used with grains to make a fermented drink that was a gentle stimulant. It's thought that the Gaelic term for whiskey, *uisge beatha*, comes from uisge *beithe*, which is "birch water."

Today, Scotland's William Brothers Brewing is known for its heather ale, made with heather tips instead of hops. This drink may indeed have been created in Scotland, but the Irish also lay claim to it, though many speculate that both countries learned of the drink through the invading Vikings. The oldest found from archeological dig sites is indeed from Scotland, though (2000 B.C.E on the Isle of Rhum), even if similar finds have been found across the British Isles and in Scandinavia. In Scotland and Ireland, it was called *fraoch* for the Gaelic term for heather, in Wales and Breton was called *coit*. Along with mead, it was said heather beer was one of the pleasures the departed enjoyed with the gods in the afterlife, though the same author ascribes it being used by druids and if there is one thing we know about the druids, it's that we really don't know a darn thing about the druids.

I love this style and have brewed it when I can't find it to buy, but it has in the past been considered a poor man's beer, as it was used during times of poor harvests in place of the usual ales. Some folk tales discuss heather being the only ingredient, with no grains, but that has been shown to be impossible, as it does not contain the required sugars. Rather, it still takes barley or other grains, and the heather is an addition for flavor and for keeping.

A truly Celtic drink is Lambswool. The Scots consider it a Christmas drink, or at least considered so since the 1850s. Many of the Yuletide customs of the north are similar to Halloween, though, and it's been given as fact by some that this is a wholly Irish drink for Halloween, at least since 1865. The name is derived from "La Mas Nbha," meaning "Feast of the Apples," whose pronunciation is close to "lammas ool" from which the current name is taken. Older recipes simply consist of roasted apples and whiskey (sounds good to me!), with milk occasionally being added. Modern recipes include apple cider (both hard and soft), with spices such as nutmeg and cinnamon (which bares quite a semblance to pumpkin pie spice).

Scotland is also home to the water spirit Seonaidh, who resides near Lewis. In order to keep this spirit happy, and prevent it from attempting to take the lives of locals, an ale was brewed and delivered to the spirit by a volunteer. The volunteer would go out at night, with the drink, into the sea, and stand waste deep, crying aloud to the Seonaidh that the offering was given. Then, I'm assuming, the volunteer would throw the ale in and hightail it out of the water while he/she could!

Penuwch Inn, Ceredigion

Wales

The legendary poet Taliesin speaks of the great druid Ceridwen, who is associated with cauldrons and the intoxicating elixirs of grain and herbs. This preparation, spoken of as far back as the 500s A.D., is called Gwin a Bragawd and was thought to have brought forth to the original Britons science, inspiration, and immortality. (This sounds quite a bit like Odin's Mead of Inspiration from Norse mythology, doesn't it?)



Penuwch Inn, Ceredigion

In other lore, Ceridwen is not a druid, but is goddess of grain and brewing. She wanted a drink that would give her son inspiration and wisdom, to make up for his hideous appearance, but the young man who stirred the ale spilled it on the last day of brewing, onto his thumb, which he sucked off and gained the wisdom meant for Ceridwen's son Afagddu. After a long chase and battle, in which the goddess ate the young man, she gave birth to him again later and he became the poet Taliesin. (Similar aspects of this story are seen in Irish mythology – in the legend of Fionn mac Cumhaill, in which he sucks his thumb after burning it on the Salmon of Knowledge and gains its wisdom and in the "Wooing of Etain" where she is swallowed as a butterfly and is reborn later as a human.)

The Welsh, through the Triads, even have designations for the best barley (Llonion in Pembrokeshire) and wheat (Maes Gwenith in Gwent, where come the best bees, as well). The introduction of brewing is a title given to Coll.

Even after the Anglo-Saxon invasion, these sometimes enemies on the Isle gave Welsh beer the proper designation of being the best. The Chronicle discusses the differences between their own fine ale and Welsh ale, called *bragawd*, made with honey, barley, and spices. This is the original form of the corrupted braggot, a term used in modernity for a mead made with ale grains. King Olfa, pagan king of Mercia, found Welsh beer to be of much better quality than his own country's, as he readily accepted a smaller portion of "Welsh beer," in addition to larger portions of "clear" and "small" ales. Other Anglo-Saxon monasteries would pay for Welsh beer, making sure that at least one of every batch included Welsh honey.

The Welsh had two main types of beer, common and spiced, of which the latter was considered of higher quality. Although mead was still the highest in demand, for his rents, a farmer could pay two casks of spiced ale to four casks of common ale, of which these were equal to one cask of mead. This distinction of Welsh beer, versus others, was maintained through the mid-1800s, where one can still find recipes, although now made only from pale malt and hops. There is even some research, by Welsh historian Deiniol ap Dafydd, which indicates Arthur Guinness' famous stout was made from an old Llanfairfechan recipe.


Welsh vs. English dragon -- 15th century

Welsh vs. English dragon -- 15th century

Definitely more of a neo-religious aspect, I still found intriguing the July ritual to the goddess Habonde, the deity of fertility, luck, magick, and cleansing. On the first Monday of July, the Welsh enjoy a lunch that includes a beer brewed eight months previously. No information is given as to why eight months is the appropriate time. I would think brewing on the previous first Monday would be a better way to honor the deity, but who am I to say.

Briton

Fermented drinks were common in Celtic Britain even before the Roman conquest. Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century B.C.E., discusses their diet of venison and milk, but that the Britons drank heavily on festive occasions. These drinks were made from honey, barley, and apples, showing that the islanders were making mead, beer, and cider. Of these, the Romans found beer to be the more advanced skill, as mead and cider are simply fermented honey-water and apple-water combinations.



Sucellus

Sucellus

In Gaul, a Celtic region that includes modern Briton, was the god Sucellus. He carried a large mallot that is sometimes thought to be a cask, and is said to preside over the Otherworld feast.

Further Reading:

The Sacred Bee in Ancient Times and Folklore (1986) Hilda Ransome

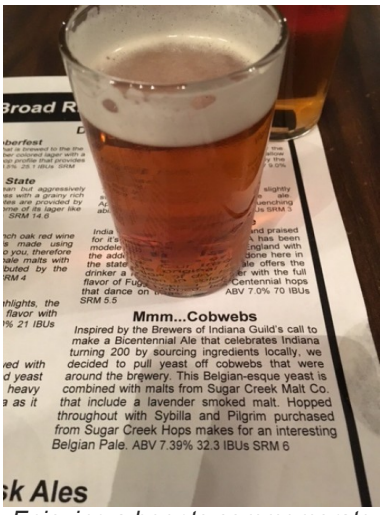
The Curiousities of Ale & Beer (???) John Bickerdyke, Charles Henry Cook, John Greville Fennell, and JM Dixon.

St. Brigid's Alefeast (11th century Old Irish poem)

Brewing Mead, Wassail! In Mazers of Mead (1948) Lt. Colonel Robert Gayre

The Lore of the Honey-bee (1908) Tickner Edwardes

Bee-Master of Warilow (1907) Tickner Edwardes



Enjoying a beer to commemorate the 200th birthday of Indiana. Nicely done Broad Ripple Brewpub!

Enjoying a beer to commemorate the 200th birthday of Indiana. Nicely done Broad Ripple Brewpub! | Source

Comments

This is such an informative hub, James Slaven! Lol. I have absolutely no idea what Druids are either.

Thank you, Cee-Jay! Maybe I should have added that information in. Or find a good article to at least point them out to!

Edit: this one is good!

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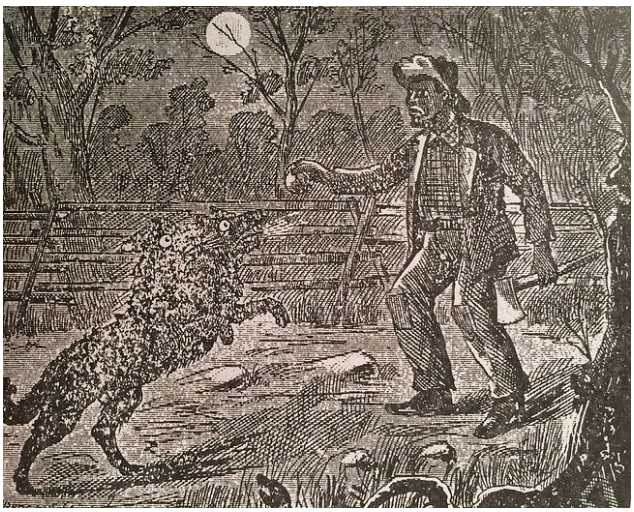
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The Bell Witch: Slavery and the Supernatural | historian

amylaurelfluker.com

October 16, 2016

Amy L. Fluker



By mid-October, my students have usually hit their midterm slump. Attendance in lecture drops, interest wanes, and it can be a struggle to keep students engaged. A few years ago, I began including the legend of the Bell Witch in my lecture on Jacksonian America in order to spark a little enthusiasm. I always pitch it as a quintessentially American ghost story—one that speaks to the vulnerability and fears of white settlers on the frontier who turned, as their predecessors in New England had, to supernatural explanations to make sense of the hostile environment around them.

The legend is briefly this:

John Bell and his family, including daughter Betsy, settle in Robertson County Tennessee in the early 1800s. After shooting at a mysterious animal on their property, the Bells become the victims of a severe haunting by an entity nicknamed the “Bell Witch.” At first, the Bells hear mysterious noises inside their cabin—as if an animal was clawing or gnawing on the woodwork. The haunting quickly escalates as Betsy complains of being pinched, slapped, and pulled out of bed by an unseen force. The witch then begins to manifest itself as a disembodied voice heard throughout the cabin. The voice sings hymns, carries on intelligent conversations with the Bells, and even debates scripture. At this point, the haunting attracts the attention of locals, who visit the Bell cabin to experience the witch or even challenge it to theological debates. The haunting finally ends after the suspicious death of John Bell, supposedly poisoned by the witch. In most tellings, the family concludes that the witch was the spirit of Kate Batts, a local woman Bell engaged in a property dispute.

It is a fantastic story—but one almost entirely unsubstantiated in the historical record. The earliest version in print dates from 1886, but the legend first reached widespread attention with the publication of M. V. Ingram’s Authenticated History of the Bell Witch and Other Stories of the World’s Greatest Unexplained Phenomenon in 1894. Written long after the passing of the principle witnesses, this account was purportedly based on the diary of one of the Bell’s sons, although that diary has never been found. Other published accounts, including a couple of books, articles in folklore journals and even Playboy magazine, rely heavily on Ingram’s history and generally repeat the same details. As one author observed, “seldom has there been Bell Witch material written without plagiarism” (Huntwell, 4).

So, it was a surprise to me when, after sharing the story of the Bell Witch in an introductory course at the University of Mississippi, a student raised her hand to ask if there was a connection to the Bell Witch cemetery in nearby Water Valley, Mississippi. I had never heard of it—but after a little digging, I uncovered an alternative narrative of the Bell Witch legend passed down by Bell descendants living in northern Mississippi. Unlike the more popular frontier folktale detailed above, the Mississippi tale is essentially linked to the slave society of the Old South. [Note: In both Ingram’s and in the Mississippi versions of the tale, the accounts of enslaved African Americans are recorded in dialect, which I have preserved.]

In the Tennessee version, the Bells seem to be typical yeoman farmers; poor, Southern whites carving out a life on the frontier. In fact, they might be easily dismissed as backwoods yokels—isolated, prone to spiritual fervor, and liable to be easily hoaxed. This impression of the Bells has also been perpetuated by the implication, advanced in folklore studies and even a major motion-picture, that the witch was a projection of Betsy’s repressed psyche. According to this interpretation, Betsy fabricated the witch to cover up an incestuous and sexually abusive relationship between her and her father (Hockenheimer, et al., 17; An American Haunting [2004]).

In the Mississippi version, on the other hand, far from being ignorant provincials, the Bells emerge as representatives of the antebellum planter class. In fact, the Bell's status as slaveholders is of primary importance to the narrative. In this account, the Bells are prosperous North Carolina planters who move to Tennessee after Bell shoots and kills his overseer, John Black (Hockenheimer, et al., 9). Black's murder was either prompted by his unwelcome attentions to Bell's daughter, Mary (Betsy does not appear in this account), or because Black was excessively abusive towards the Bell's slaves. In a recounting of the Mississippi legend published in 1934, Black is described as "the worst kind of a bully, and a man of high temper, in fact, a regular overseer of the kind you hear about in Yankee stories" (Hudson & McCarter, 47). Whatever prompted Black's murder, John Bell emerges as the ideal paternalistic Southern slave owner—the kind vaunted by slavery apologists—who protects the well being of his dependents, including enslaved people and white women.

As the story goes, Bell is acquitted of wrongdoing in the overseer's death, but afterwards his crops suffer from a terrible blight. Upon moving to Tennessee in search of better land, the haunting begins in earnest. As in the more popular tale, the witch targets the Bell children. In a new twist, however, an unnamed enslaved woman identifies the witch as Black's vengeful spirit (Hudson & McCarter, 47-8). Determined to prove her case, the enslaved woman volunteers to spend the night in the children's room. Around midnight, the Bells are roused by the sounds of the entity attacking the woman. She swears before them: "Hit's him! Hit's him! Fo' Gawd, hit's him! . . . Lawd Gawd, how hit whup me, whup me limber an' whup me stiff, whup me jes' lack him" (48). The account moves quickly past this incident, but it speaks volumes about the brutality of slavery. An enslaved woman corroborates a supernatural attack by explicitly comparing it to beatings received at the hands of John Black in life. It is compelling testimony, which the Bells apparently do not dispute.

The haunting continues, centering on Mary, whom the spirit professes to love. In fact, it drives away at least one fiancé—a handsome young slave owner named Gardner. Shortly thereafter, and in part to seek a change of scene for his broken-hearted daughter, Bell moves his family to Panola County, Mississippi, "ten miles east of Batesville on the Oxford road" (53). There, the spirit manifests itself once more and asks Bell's permission to marry his daughter. Bell refuses, and Mary falls into a prolonged illness and subsequently dies. With her last breath, Mary tells her family she can see the spirit at last and that she can love him (57).

In the final estimation, the relative truth of the two tales is open to speculation, although there is perhaps less veracity to the Mississippi version. The Bells of Robertson County, Tennessee, for example, never had a daughter named Mary. Whether or not Mary Bell lived at all, whether she belonged to another branch of the family, whether an entirely different group of Bells from Tennessee arrived in Mississippi remains unclear. It is true, however, that some of the Robertson County Bell children, including Betsy, moved to Mississippi. Betsy herself is buried in Long Branch Cemetery southwest of Water Valley, Mississippi. Her tombstone, a modern replacement, reads: "she has gone to her home in heaven and all her afflictions are over."

Both accounts deserve further exploration, which I will pursue in a future research project. Whether or not there is any truth to it, the legend of the Bell Witch offers a unique perspective on the nineteenth-century South in history and memory. Whether it speaks more to the anxieties associated with westward migration and life on the frontier or whether it is more emblematic of a paternalistic romanticization of the slaveholding South, it is a chilling tale and a perplexing bit of history.

Illustration: Dean, an enslaved man, confronts the Bell Witch in the form of a two-headed dog (Ingram, 35).

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Weston Arthur Goodspeed, John Woolridge, Winfield S. Wheatley, and Zachary T. Emerson, History of Tennessee from Earliest Times to the Present; Togetehr with Historical and Biographical Sketches of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, and Houston Counties (Nashville: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1886): 833.

Arthur Palmer Hudson, Ed. Specimens of Mississippi Folklore (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1928): 157-160. [Reviewed in Clarion-Ledger, January 9, 1929.]

M. V. Ingram, Authenticated History of the Bell Witch and Other Stories of the World's Greatest Unexplained Phenomenon (Clarksville, TN: 1894).

University of Mississippi Department of Archives and Special Collections

Arthur Palmer Hudson and Pete Kyle McCarter, "The Bell Witch of Tennessee and Mississippi: A Folk Legend," The Journal of American Folklore Vol. 47, No. 183 (Jan-Mar, 1934): 45-63.

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Jeffrey Huntwell, "The Secrets of the Bell Witch" (1971).

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Slovak brothers win burial competition with fastest, neatest grave

yahoo.com

REUTERS
Reuters

ReutersNovember 10, 2016



Winners, brothers Ladislav (L) and Csaba Skladan from Slovakia, pose for a photo during a grave digging championship in Trencin, Slovakia, November 10, 2016, where eleven pairs of gravediggers are competing in digging based on accuracy, speed, and aesthetic quality. REUTERS/Radovan Stoklasa

TRENCIN, Slovakia (Reuters) - Two brothers from Slovakia won a grave-digging competition at an international exhibition of funeral, burial and cremation services on Thursday.

Ladislav and Csaba Skladan, aged 43 and 41 respectively, dug a grave 1.5 meters deep, two meters long and 90 centimeters wide in 54 minutes in the western Slovak town of Trencin, beating 10 other two-member teams from Slovakia, Poland and Hungary as a small audience cheered loudly.

Their grave was also the neatest, a five-member jury agreed.

"We want to show and appreciate the hard work of grave diggers," said Ladislav Striz, who established the contest last year.

"Most Slovak graveyards are so crowded and spaces between graves so narrow that we need human diggers instead of machines," he said. "They work hard, come rain, come snow."

"I am happy we won, it's a satisfaction after fifteen years in this job," Csaba Skladan said.

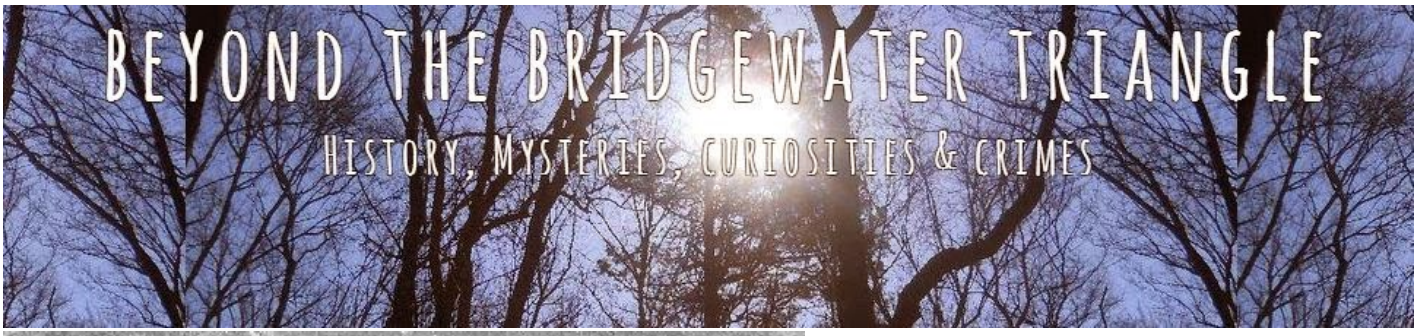
"I had to focus on speed today but usually, when the weather is nice and I can chat with my brother, it's a dream job," added Ladislav Skladan.

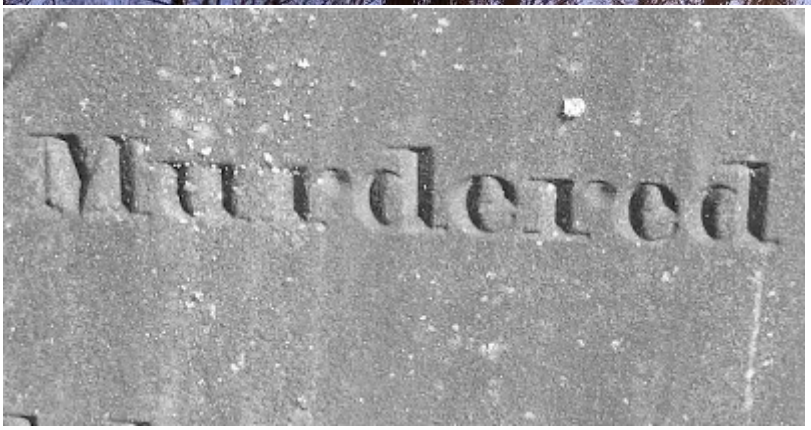
(Reporting By Tatiana Jancarikova; Editing by Gareth Jones)

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Small Towns, Big Murders: Bizarre Crimes of the Bridgewaters

thebridgewatertriangle.com





This is a photo of an actual grave of one of the Bridgewater Triangle's many murder victims.

It was late on a cold Monday night in February, 2010 at the Bridgewater police station. And here in this quiet New England town, the scene looked more like a page out of a Stephen King novel than a Monday night at a small town police station.

A man's face was smeared with blood, as were his hands. His clothes were drenched a deep crimson. "Do you need medical attention?" The police officers asked him. "No." The man answered quietly. "The blood is not mine."

Earlier that night, 41-year old Brian Bellamy smashed a hammer through a window of his estranged wife's parents home and headed up the stairs possessed with rage. Bellamy's two year-old son was sleeping next to his wife, but that did not deter him from his evil and dastardly deed. Bellamy started bludgeoning his wife with the hammer. Hard, violent blows to her face and neck. Blood splattered everywhere, dripping from the bed and onto the floor. Next Bellamy took his hands and wrapped them around her small neck and began the squeeze.

When the victim's father tried to stop him, Bellamy started to strangle his father-in-law as well. That's when the Bridgewater police arrived, just in time. The victim's mother had called 911 at the beginning of the crime. Luckily, the woman survived.

This was certainly not the first bludgeoning or crime of passion involving an attack on a family member in Bridgewater, a town that has a dark history of madness and murder. Behind the veils of this beautiful college town, lies a sinister and mysterious history of brutal matricides and parricides, spousal arguments that lead to murder and then suicide. The patterns of violent domestic disputes

goes on to this very day, according the Bridgewater Police Twitter page. It is not hard to notice the patterns of high call volume in responses to domestic disturbances among family members.

"WE HAVE GOT TO DIE," 1909



SHOOTS WIFE, KILLS HIMSELF

West Bridgewater is Scene of Tragedy.

Janeiro Fired at Woman While She Lay in Bed.

Infant by Her Side at the Time Unharmed.

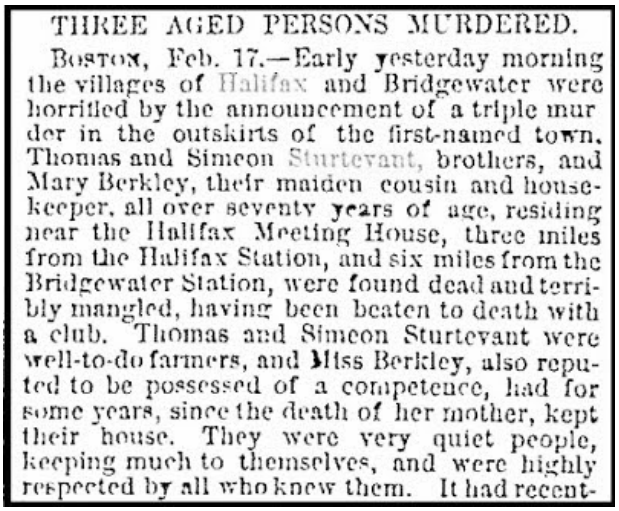
At 4 a.m. on August 22 in West Bridgewater, Marianio Janeiro entered the bedroom where his wife lay in bed, her tiny infant child asleep next to her. Marianio had just bathed, shaved and dressed in his finest clothes.

The poor woman was probably wondering where her husband was going, all dressed up at 4 o'clock in the morning. But if she was going to ask him where he was off to, she never had the chance to ask him.

"This is the last of you and me; We have got to die," Marianio said to his wife. Then he took a revolver and shot her in the head. "The bullet entered her head back of the left ear and left an ugly wound. After shooting his wife he held the pistol to his head and fired the second shot just above the right ear and fell dead instantly."

The baby was unharmed. Although she did sustain critical injured, Mrs. Janeiro survived the attempted to murder to the best of this writer's knowledge.

THE MURDER OF THE STURTEVANTS, 1874



THREE AGED PERSONS MURDERED.

Boston, Feb. 17.—Early yesterday morning the villages of Halifax and Bridgewater were horrified by the announcement of a triple murder in the outskirts of the first-named town. Thomas and Simeon Sturtevant, brothers, and Mary Berkley, their maiden cousin and housekeeper, all over seventy years of age, residing near the Halifax Meeting House, three miles from the Halifax Station, and six miles from the Bridgewater Station, were found dead and terribly mangled, having been beaten to death with a club. Thomas and Simeon Sturtevant were well-to-do farmers, and Miss Berkley, also reputed to be possessed of a competence, had for some years, since the death of her mother, kept their house. They were very quiet people, keeping much to themselves, and were highly respected by all who knew them. It had recent-

Seven miles from the Bridgewater Depot in nearby Halifax, "during the peaceful quiet of a Sabbath evening, one of the foulest and most unnatural murders that ever stained the criminal actual. of any locality, had been perpetrated. Three aged persons, the inmates of the same home, whose lives had been passed in plodding industry, and whose history was as uneventful as human experience can be, were suddenly involved in as dark a tragedy as the mind of man can conceive, and in the midst of it hurried out of existence."



On February 15, 1874, three elderly people were brutally beaten to death with a sharp cart spike. A neighbor found what was left of them the following day. The crime scene had the even the toughest police officer shaken. "The three aged occupants of that house were found cruelly murdered, their heads pounded, to a jelly. Thomas and Simeon, the two brothers, within the house that should have sheltered them, and Miss

Mary Buckley, the housekeeper, outside, though almost within its very shadow." The triple murder of two brothers and their housekeeper had locals of the Bridgewater area living in terror--until police arrested the crazed murder, William E. Sturtevant, the very nephew of the victims.

William was murder suspect number one and confessed because of a parrot. (Yes, a parrot.) Mary Buckley had a pet parrot named Captain Kidd. When police brought William to the crime scene, Captain Kidd shrieked "Murderer, Murderer!" and then made the sound of death rattle. The parroting the likely last words of Mary Buckley was simply too much for William, who caved and confessed right there.

The house where the murder took place is rumored to be haunted. Not far from the house is the cemetery where Simeon and Thomas Sturtevant are buried. Their gravestones read "MURDERED" across them. The murderer, William Sturtevant was buried in the same cemetery in a secret burial conducted under the cloak of night after he was executed by hanging for his dark deeds to his two elderly uncles and his cousin, their housekeeper.



In the 1980s, a local newspaper ran a story about the grisly history of the Sturtevant House. The reporter interviewed the current occupant, a Bridgewater State College professor at the time. Although the man claimed not be a man of "superstition" and refused to accept the local stories that the house was haunted, he finally found himself succumb to the fact that something was indeed in the house. "The house has a powerful presence....the house makes noises. Footsteps, breaking, heavy breathing. I never see anything, but I think that someone is there."


Local

Old Halifax Colonial's grisly history remembered

Bridgewater College art teacher tries to ignore sound of ghostly footsteps in an empty house

"Several times we have had people over and when they got up to leave, the door swung open. The door to the upstairs attic kept coming unlatched and banging. I kept closing it, but it kept opening, even though there was no wind."

THE BRIDGEWATER MURDER, 1879

A fight over potatoes on September 24th, led to the bloody massacre of Henry Gunn, at the hands of his own son Justin, who attacked his father with both a screwdriver and hatchet. The Boston papers reported that the victims "brains were dashed while he slept" with "two hideous wounds to the head." Justin Gunn was not remorseful for the crime at all when apprehended by Bridgewater police a few weeks after the crime. In Gunn's confession to the police, Justin was oddly calm and in complete control when he described the horrific events that



THE BRIDGEWATER MURDER.

Continuation of the Trial of Young Gunn.

The Prisoner's Confession as Told by the Police.

Expert Medical Testimony Given—The Accused's Composure.

[Special Despatch to The Boston Globe.

PLYMOUTH, May 19.—The court came in at 9 o'clock for the second day's session of the Gunn trial, and the room was filled. Among the spectators was the prisoner's younger brother, Melvin H., who came on from Kentucky to attend the trial. Van R. Swift, chairman of the selectmen of Bridgewater, was the first witness called by the government, and he testified to the fact of going to the house on Friday morning, and to having made a thorough examination of the premises. The body was lying on the floor when he found it, and the bed gave evidence of having been occupied by two persons. On the cross-examination he said he could not tell whether the bed had been occupied on Thursday night or the night before; but the indentures

occurred on September 24, 1879. After his father scolded him over his son's error in putting wet potatoes in the root cellar, Justin Gunn claimed that his father "knocked him down." Gunn went on to say in his confession: "I got up, reached to the mantle piece and took a small screwdriver about the size of my finger, but about two feet long and struck him with it but he got the best of me and pounded me good. I was wild for revenge. As he rested on the edge of the bed, I went out of the dining room into the passage way and took a hatchet which I had found there and came back to the room where he was. Holding the hatchet--a heavy one--in my left hand...I went to the front of father and when I got past I turned and struck him the head with it, using both hands and knocking him so that his head fell toward the head of the bed on which he was sitting. I struck him three or four times. He fell off of the bed. I picked him and and laid him on it again, he made not noise at all."

MODERN DAY PSYCHO, 2002

One of the most recent murder within a family in the Bridgewaters occurred on December 15, 2002, when George Nardi, living with his mother, Deborah Buchard on Goodwin Street in East Bridgewater, killed her in a fit of rage when she refused to make him dinner that night. The murder weapon were Nardi's bare hands with which he smothered her to death. Immediately after the crime, Nardi left a chilling voice mail for his brother. It was of Nardi laughing insanely, then finally saying, "You're not going to be able to spend Christmas with mom this year." Norman Bates-style, Nardi lived with the rotting corpse of his mother for over two weeks. Prosecutors reported that Buchard's "bloody corpse was found Monday covered with an afghan in the bedroom of their apartment."

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Woman Accused Of Smearing Peanut Butter On 30 Cars In Bizarre Anti-Trump Protest

huffingtonpost.com

She was "just fed up about the entire election."

10/18/2016 07:51 pm ET



Chelsea Ferguson was arrested Monday after she allegedly peanut-buttered a whole lot of cars.

As protests go, this one was nutty.

A woman in Amherst Junction, Wisconsin, has been charged with disorderly conduct after she allegedly spread peanut butter on 30 cars that she believed belonged to Donald Trump supporters.

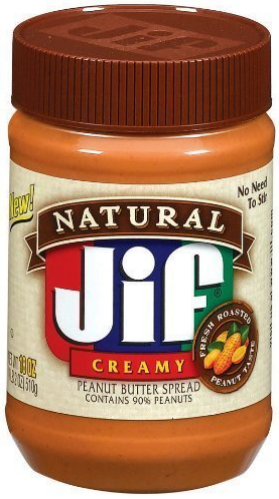
Turns out the cars actually belonged to members of the Tomorrow River Conservation Club.

Witnesses said 32-year-old Christina Ferguson stormed into the club meeting on Monday night, holding what a Portage County deputy's report described as a "family-size jar of low-sodium, creamy natural Jif," according to the Stevens Point City Times.

The suspect allegedly yelled at club members about how much she hated Trump before being asked to leave the meeting. Ferguson complied with the request.

A few minutes later, members started worrying that she might be doing something with that family-sized jar of low-sodium, creamy natural Jif. So they ran out to the parking lot.

A man identified in the official complaint as Mark Pearson told sheriff's deputies that he saw Ferguson spreading peanut butter on one of the members' cars. He yelled at her to stop and she walked away, only to enter a nearby apartment.



Deputies went to the apartment and attempted to question Ferguson. At first, a man at the apartment claimed she had been home all night and refused to let her talk with the officers, according to the arrest report. Ferguson finally answered the door and also claimed she had not left all night.

Officers noted her slurred speech and a "strong smell of intoxicants." Ferguson was also licking her fingers as she spoke, the report noted.

After Pearson fingered Ferguson as the alleged peanut butter spreader, officers said she admitted interrupting the meeting and spreading peanut butter on the cars.

Officers said Ferguson grew emotional as she explained how much she loved Hillary Clinton and hated Donald Trump. She then explained why she'd misused peanut butter.

“Peanut butter is better than fire-bombing,” the officer quoted her as saying. She added that Trump wants to fire-bomb everybody in other countries.

Ferguson also told the deputies that people have been “terrorizing” her recently and it must be because they love Trump.

The officers pointed out to her that she had interrupted a conservation meeting, not a Trump rally. She allegedly said that she was sorry, but that she was “just fed up about the entire election.”

Ferguson submitted to a breath test in the apartment and blew a 0.218, according to the report.

Officers took a family-sized jar of low-sodium, creamy natural Jif found in Ferguson’s apartment as evidence. They also photographed peanut-buttered cars that were still in the parking lot, although many of the victims had already cleaned off their vehicles or left the premises.

Despite the mess and inconvenience, Portage County deputy Dan Kontos did see the bright side.

“Fortunately it wasn’t chunky peanut butter, so vehicles didn’t get scratched,” he told the Stevens Point City Times.

Jail records do not show Ferguson’s name, which suggests that, like her peanut butter of choice, she was out in a jiff.

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Snitch Crow Leads Police To Hidden Meth Stash

huffingtonpost.com

The bird fished a bag of drugs out of a gas station's trash can.

10/14/2016 06:18 am ET | **Updated** 7 hours ago

Some cops use drug dogs to find contraband.

But in Western Australia, it seems that crows are willing to do the job instead.

A surveillance camera captured a crow fishing a bag of methamphetamine out of a Perth gas station's garbage can on Monday.

After hovering over the receptacle, it plucked out the illegal stash and dumped it next to a pump.

Two police officers from the West Australian capital Perth later pulled up at the station to fill their vehicle up with fuel and spotted the narcotics on the ground.

"No one was in the immediate vicinity so they decided to check the service station CCTV to try and identify a person or vehicle responsible for the drugs," Western Australia Police wrote in a Facebook post.

"The POI (person of interest) turned out to be a pesky crow who had fished the drugs out of a nearby rubbish bin," the department added.

Police seized the drugs and are trying to ascertain who dropped them off in the first place. Despite the serious nature of the discovery, officers still saw the funny side of the bizarre incident.

"That crow needs to get himself a lawyer," one of the officers says in the video.

They also posted a series of puns on social media, speculating that the crow "took off from the scene" and was "heading for a crowbar."

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Someone Vandalized A Soviet Star In Russia And Turned It Into Patrick

37K views 17 hours ago by Lina D.

While most former Soviet Republics destroy Soviet-era monuments, someone in Voronezh came up with an even better idea. They turned the star of one tower building into Patrick from SpongeBob SquarePants!

Show Full Text



Image credits: Vladimir Malder



Image credits: Vladimir Malder

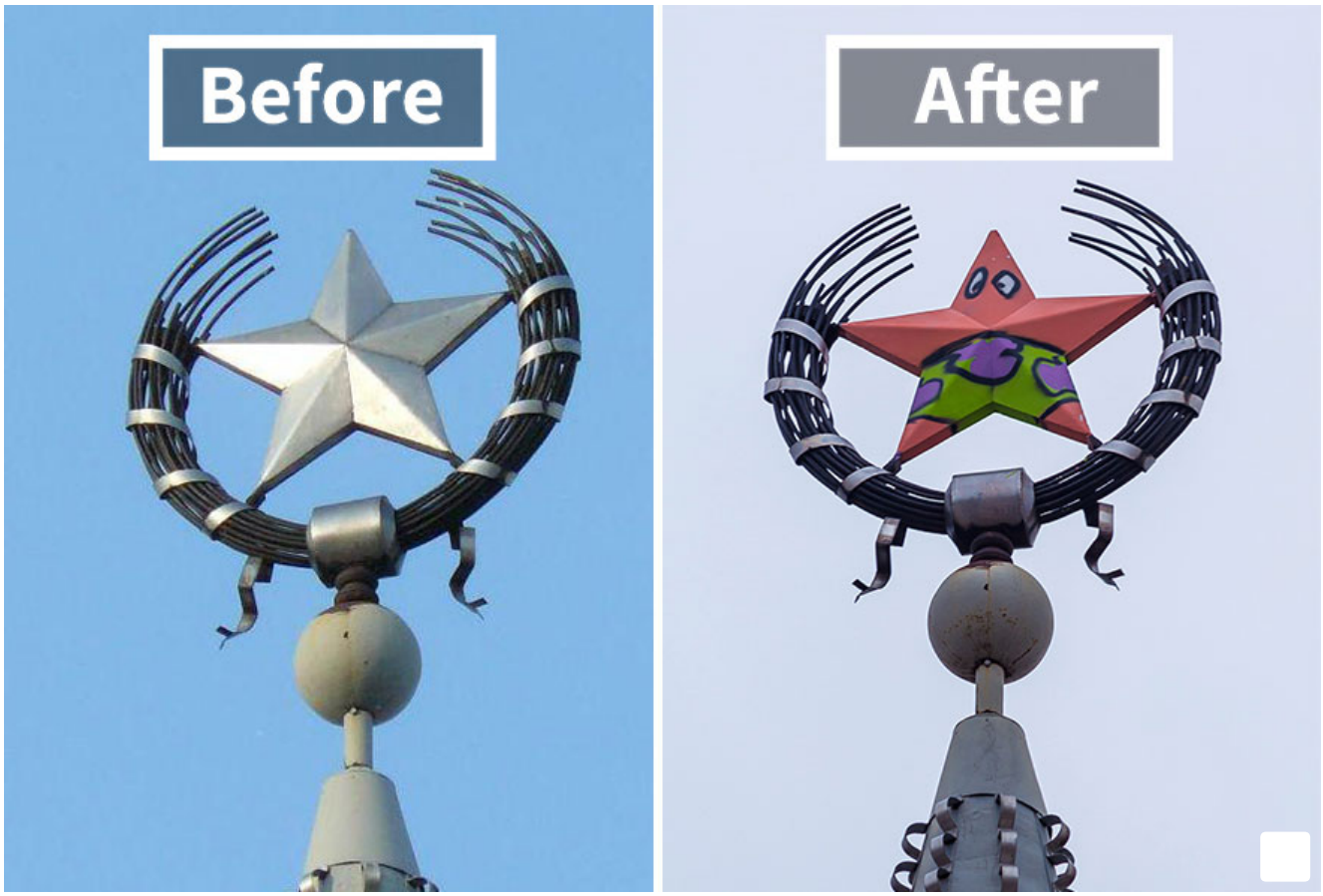


Image credits: Vladimir Malder





Image credits: Vladimir Malder

Popular on Bored Panda



Spongebob Fans Can Now Sleep In A Real-Life Pineapple Hotel, Just Not Under The Sea



15+ Architects Who Had One Job And Still Failed



3 Years Ago I Started Learning 100 Methods Of Drawing, Here Is One Of Them

What do you think ?

Add a comment...

Loney L *15 hours ago*
Patrick what are you doing up there?! Spongebob must be worried sick about you ^_^
30 Reply

Mary Crisan *4 hours ago*
that`s the spirit
3 Reply

Janine Göbel *14 hours ago*
How on earth did they get up there ^^'
25 Reply

berestowaja *15 hours ago*
Genius!
10 Reply

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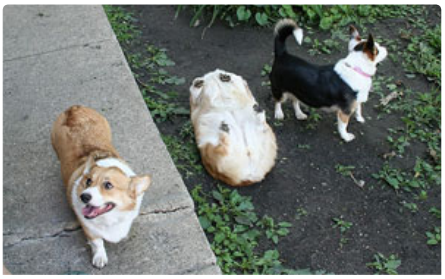
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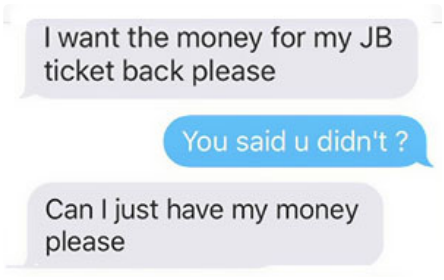

Photoshop Troll Who Takes Photo Requests Too Literally Strikes Again (15+ New Pics)




Husky Gets Stuck On Coconut Tree, The Internet Decides To Help... With Photoshop (15+ Pics)



15+ Dog Posts On Tumblr That Are Impossible To Get Through Without Smiling



Woman Gets Brilliant Revenge On Cheating Ex-Boyfriend, And He Won't Forget It For 17 Years




Somebody Put Sunglasses On A Bunny And It Started An Epic Photoshop Battle (10+ Pics)

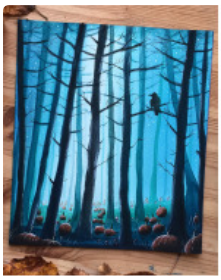


20+ Of The Most Useless Things Ever Made

Trending on Bored Panda



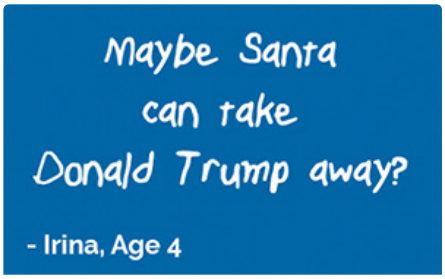
I Make Jewelry Pieces Inspired By Nature And Fantasy




My Paintings Portray The Magic That Lies All Around Us




Someone Combined Pokémon With The Simpsons And The Result Is Hilarious



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Fake Vs Genuine People: 8 Ways To Identify Them



This Soldier Refused To Leave Sick Kitten Behind In Afghanistan

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10+ Simple But Clever Charts And Infographics By Stephen Wildish



Anonymous Vigilante Is Fighting Asshole Drivers With This Genius Parking Note



20+ Hilariously Sad Adulthood Tweets That Will Make You Laugh Then Cry



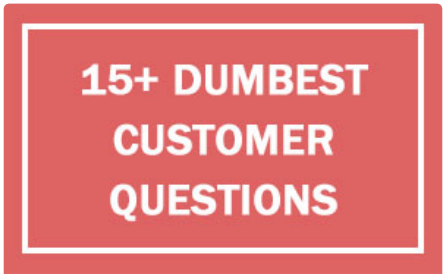
These Siblings Won't Stop Pranking Each Other By Hiding Tina Belcher Cutout Around The House



Man Sits In Starbucks Completely Unfazed By Flood, Inspires Hilarious Photoshop Battle (8+ Pics)







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10+ Funny Tweets That Will Make Feminists Laugh

15+ Of The Dumbest Customer Questions Ever Asked



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This 11-Year-Old Comedian Is Killing Audiences With Her Hilariously Inappropriate Jokes



Guy Requests Framed Clinton Photo At Trump Hotel And Doesn't Specify Which One, Staff Delivers



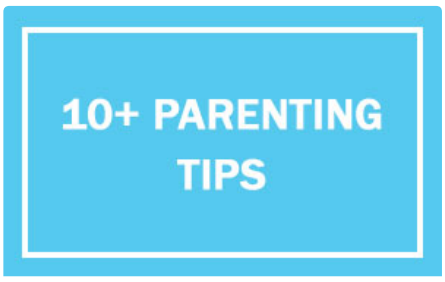
Super Tall 17-Year-Old Is Handing Out Business Cards To People Who Won't Stop Asking About His Height



Men Are Fighting Back Against Girlfriends Stealing Their Hoodies



People Warned Me About Pickpockets In Barcelona. So I Made This...



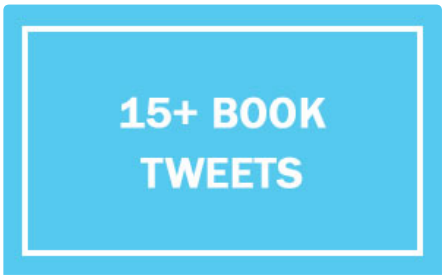
10+ Of The Funniest Parenting Tips From Moms And Dads Ever



This Badass Hawk Just Sparked The Most Intense Photoshop Battle Ever (10+ Pics)



My Baby Is Insanely Expressive



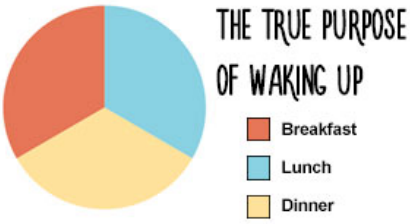




15+ Funny Tweets That Only Book Worms Will Understand

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Someone's invented a vibrator based on the aubergine emoji

reportuk.org

Report UK

By Metro -
October 30, 2016



A vibrator based on the aubergine emoji has gone on sale.

The Emojibator, which costs £26, is styled after the phallic symbol often used in lieu of cruder emojis.

The vibrator boasts '10 vibration settings that always hit the spot' and is waterproof 'for bath and shower play'.



Someone

Amused social media users branded the toy 'ridiculous' but 'genius', poking fun at the toy's photo shoot involving a cat.

Joshua Kanter said: 'Wouldn't it be easier and cheaper to buy an actual eggplant? You'd really be killing two birds with one stone because afterwards you can cook it for dinner.'

Barbara Casey added: 'Since when do we have to spend money to make masturbation fun, easy and accessible?'

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Spider from Mars? Bizarre arachnid sparks online fears of ALIEN INVASION on Earth

express.co.uk

A SPIDER that looks like it crawled straight from out of space has sparked fears of an ALIEN invasion.

By STUART WINTER
PUBLISHED: 14:47, Mon, Oct 3, 2016 | UPDATED: 15:17, Mon, Oct 3, 2016





The spooky arachnid has face-like markings on its day-glow abdomen that bear a striking resemblance to little green aliens from planet Mars.

When pictures of the spider began emerging on Russian websites, there were fears that a poisonous monster from outer space was beginning its conquest of Earth.

Residents of Penza, a city of 520,000 residents in Russia's Oblast region, went apoplectic over the image of the spider which had turned up in a resident's flat.

The unnamed householder's photograph to a newsgroup saw members warning that the creature was predatory, poisonous and dangerous to humans.

It took respected zoologist Oleg Polumordvinov to allay fears about the alien-looking invertebrate.

He identified the species as a flower crab spider, a species that grows little more than 6mm.

Online photographs of a species with the Latin name Ebrechtella tricuspidata look remarkably like the one that caused such consternation.



An expert said: "These spiders are typical for our region and do not pose any threat to humans."

This spider is definitely not poisonous, I used to eat those when I was a kid

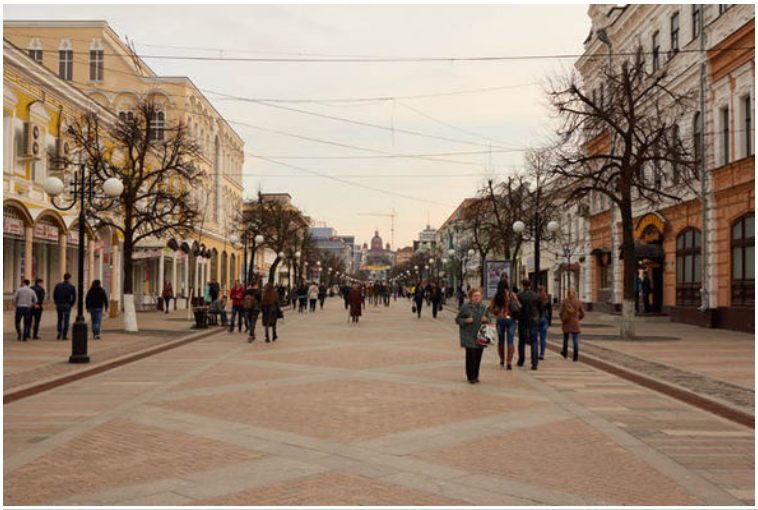
Zoologist Oleg Polumordvinov

He explained how they are found regularly in woods during the autumn and eat only flies.

But they are incapable of biting through human skin, he added.

The zoologist believes the spider must have been brought into the flat from outside and underlined that there was no need to be afraid.

He said: “Just catch it and release it onto the street. There is nothing else to do here.”



While the spider was making headlines, one resident of Penza was obviously not concerned about the creature’s potentially extra terrestrial provenance, nor its venom.

He messaged worried residents: “This spider is definitely not poisonous, I used to eat those when I was a kid. You are good.”

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Spain's 'Napflix' aims to bore viewers to sleep

18/10

thelocal.es

AFP · 22 Oct 2016, 14:04

Published: 22 Oct 2016 14:04 GMT+02:00

A Spanish video platform called Napflix, designed to put people to sleep with dull content, was launched this week and its founders are on the lookout for more "monotony and repetition."

Napflix offers about 60 videos taken from YouTube, including footage of rain pattering on windowpanes, a documentary on pandas and quantum physics lectures, to help people doze off.

"The idea is to make entertainment boring," Victor Gutierrez de Tena, one of Napflix's two co-founders told AFP on Friday.

"We are looking for monotony and repetition," the 31-year-old said of the service, which was launched on Monday.

"It could be the kind of things that remind us of our childhood, like post-lunch classes and TV serials we watched after meals which just went on and on, ones where you wouldn't lose the plot if you fell asleep," he said.

Other offerings include clips of petanque -- a traditional French game ofboules -- and excerpts from Tchaikovsky's ballet Swan Lake.

Although De Tena and his co-founder work in advertising, he said Napflix was not a paid publicity campaign, but rather an experiment in building up communities of fans on different online platforms.

Despite Spain's reputation as the land of the afternoon siesta, the vast majority of Spaniards forgo that postprandial slumber, according to a survey by a bed manufacturer.

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Speedy shovels shine in Slovakia's grave-digging contest

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressNovember 10, 2016



Grave diggers compete during the Grave Digging Championships in Trencin, Slovakia, Thursday, Nov. 10, 2016. (AP Photo/Ronald Zak)

TRENCIN, Slovakia (AP) — Ten teams from Slovakia, Poland and Hungary on Thursday turned mounds of ground in a competition to crown the fastest gravediggers in central Europe.

The Grave Digging Championships held in the Slovakian city of Trencin was meant to promote the funeral industry and bring some levity to a serious profession.

"This whole exhibition is about getting groups of funeral companies together," event spokesman Christian Striz, who dressed as the Grim Reaper for the occasion, said. "It's all about showing people how hard" the gravedigger's job is.

The contest graded the teams on speed and accuracy, as graves had to be dug to exact specifications: 1.5-meters (5-feet) deep, 2-meters (6.5-feet) long and 0.9-meters (3-feet) wide.

No modern tools were allowed, only shovels and picks, which made for demanding digging for less fortunate teams.

"Gravel and stones — about 20-30 centimeters" of it," Gabriel Draffy, from the Krematorium Molnar in Nove Zamky, Slovakia, said. "The others didn't have that!"

A team representing Peter Pastorok's funeral services from the Slovakian village of Kalna nad Hronom emerged as the winner.

The contest took place as part of the third International Exhibition of Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services.

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Spirit Blamed for Fainting at Factory

Friday, 04 November 2016

khmertimeskh.com

Sunday, 06 November 2016 09:18:45 GMT (ICT)

Nearly 80 workers at the Wing Star Shoes factory in Kampong Speu province fainted again yesterday morning after more than 100 fainted on Wednesday, with workers claiming it was the result of a spirit.

Factory employee Norn Sophea told Khmer Times yesterday that the workers started fainting and feeling dizzy when their shift began at about 7:15am and were subsequently sent to hospital.

“The factory invited four monks to bless the factory to bring good luck and chase the bad spirit away, but the workers fainted before the monks arrived,” the 28-year-old said.

Ms. Sophea said the factory would invite the monks to make a blessing again before the workers arrive for work today.

She claimed the workers fainted because a ghost spirit had possessed one of the workers, shocking others who proceeded to faint one after another.

“I believe a ghost spirit caused the workers to faint because it did not smell like the chemicals used for killing insects and there was sufficient air in the factory,” she said.

“There is the smell of glue, but it is familiar to us because we smell it every day without any problems.”

According to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), a total of 139 workers at the factory fainted on Wednesday because of poor health.

Ms. Sophea said the workers who did not faint were allowed to go home, while the workers who fainted will be expected back at work on Monday to allow sufficient time for recovery.

“I helped send the workers who are not well to hospital and they told me they are dizzy and very tired,” she said.

Ms. Sophea said the ghost spirit came into the workers’ body like it had in previous years, which she suggested was the spirit from one of three workers killed when a mezzanine at the factory collapsed in May 2013.

A Wing Star Shoes factory official declined to comment yesterday.

Nearly 2,000 workers from 32 garment factories across the country have fainted since 2015, with similar numbers recorded for 2014.

According to an NSSF report, eight traffic accidents involving garment workers from October 1 until Wednesday caused 282 injuries – 81 seriously – in Phnom Penh as well as Kandal, Preah Sihanouk, Svay Rieng, Takeo and Kampong Chhnang provinces.

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Spooked by violence, Mexicans staying away from cemeteries for Day of the Dead celebrations

Mexico City –

foxnews.com

By Alasdair Baverstock

Published October 27, 2016
Fox News Latino



MX DoD slideshow 4 Latino.jpg

Alarmed by the possibility of violent crime, many Mexico City residents are shying away from the capital's cemeteries for the traditional Day of the Dead rituals of bringing food, drink and offerings to the gravesites of deceased relatives.

Alarmed by the possibility of violent crime, this year Mexico City residents are shying away from the capital's cemeteries for traditional Day of the Dead rituals. They'd rather honor their ancestors from the safety of their own homes.

Following a pre-Hispanic custom of bringing food, drink and offerings to the gravesites of deceased relatives, the Day of the Dead celebrations see thousands of visits to cemeteries across the country from Oct. 29 to Nov. 2.

But following a spate of break-ins and robberies at the Iztapalapa graveyard in Mexico City, one of the capital's most dangerous districts, many members of ground staff say they have seen a significant drop in visitors to family gravestones.

"The graveyard has become notorious as an easy place to commit a crime and get away with it," graveyard supervisor Benjamin Mendoza told Fox News Latino. "Residents feel off their guard while kneeling at their loved ones' gravesides."

On the night of Oct. 19, criminals broke the chains on the front gate of Iztapalapa Municipal graveyard, where over 5,000 people are buried, before raiding the storeroom, front office and a number of graves belonging to the wealthiest families in town.

It was the fourth break-in during the last three months.

“The night watchman was asleep through every incident,” according to Mendoza, who says he gave up investigating the crime spree following the first break-in.

Robbery has also been known to occur at gravesides during the five-day celebration of the Day of the Dead, when praying families are an easy target for thieves.

Ninety-year-old Raúl Mendez was robbed at gunpoint two years ago as he paid his respects at his parents’ graveside. He says the experience shocked him but has not stopped him from returning.

“Two hooded men put a gun in my face and told me to give them everything I had, down to my jacket,” he told Fox News Latino with tears in his eyes. “I could not believe people could stoop so low as to rob an old man in a graveyard.”

“But to stop coming would be to let those sons of b***s scare me off a beautiful Mexican tradition,” he said. “Since the incident, I have not brought any valuables with me to the graveside.”

The Iztapalapa graveyard received just 12,000 visitors during the 2015 Day of the Dead celebration, down from an estimated 31,000 who visited their ancestors at the same cemetery a decade ago.

“I can understand why people wouldn’t want to visit once they’ve been through something like that,” Mendez said, “but if you’re going to be shot, where better than a graveyard?”

The Iztapalapa graveyard is an ideal site for would-be robbers. The tightly packed gravesites and single-story shrines, combined with the crowds that visit the area during the ceremonial days, allow criminals to vanish within seconds of a robbery.

It’s not only the rough districts of Mexico City that have suffered from this crime wave. A spree of grave robberies have occurred throughout the capital, particularly in the more affluent western districts since 2014, leaving police and residents at a loss of how to handle graveyard security.

Rosa María Alorón and her mother, Graciela Cruz, say they prefer to hold their gravesite visits weeks ahead of the festival days to avoid the risk of robbery.

“We come to their graves beforehand to pray a rosary while we can feel safe,” she said. “Many of my friends have been robbed here, so it’s better to come earlier.”

“We hold our actual ceremony at home, where we put out a candle for each relative as well as offerings of the things they enjoyed,” Alorón told FNL while putting out fresh flowers at her father’s grave.

The Iztapalapa government has reacted to the robberies by sending police officers to patrol the graveyard during the higher-density periods of the festivities, but many say it is a difficult area to police.

“We’re stepping up security again for this year, but it’s a difficult place to police” says Mendoza, who has been the graveyard supervisor for the past six months.

“The robbers here know the cops stick to the paths,” the 90-year-old Mendez said, “and so they concentrate on people in the trickier areas to reach, where you have to dodge around other graves.”

He added, “They will wait until the cops are out of sight, but even then there are multiple entrances, and a 20-year-old robber is always going to get away from a policeman in a maze like this.”

“The only thing the graveyard cops actually do during the Day of the Dead is stop you from enjoying a beer or tequila beside your dead relatives,” he said.

Alasdair Baverstock is a freelance writer based in Mexico.

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"Ghost" gets impatient waiting for a drink - tries to get bartender's attention

15:50, 9 Nov 2016 Updated 15:53, 9 Nov 2016 By Zahra Mulroy

mirror.co.uk

Spooky moment "ghost" gets impatient waiting for a drink - and tries to get bartender's attention



Poltergeist gets sick of waiting at the bar

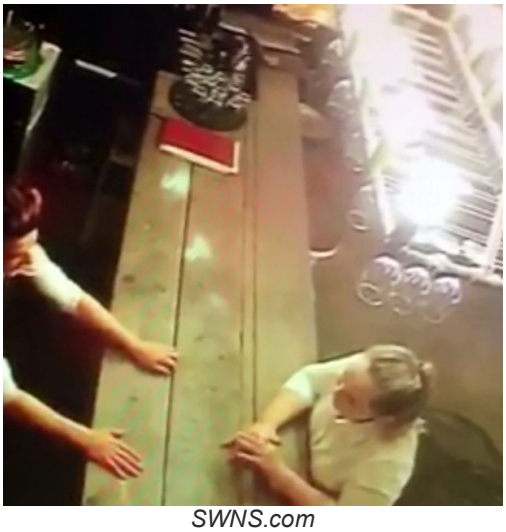
We've all been there.

It's Friday night, you've had a hellish week at work, your boss is a nightmare , your life is generally a mess and you're waiting at the bar for that well-deserved drink.

Only, you're having trouble getting the bartender's attention. Suddenly, rather than being a joyous transaction, it's become a painfully long wait.

Most of us mortals content ourselves with huffing and puffing. If you're a poltergeist though, you have ways of getting that bartender's attention.

Spooky video CCTV footage taken New York Italian Kitchen a shows the moment a glass mysteriously topples off a tray at a restaurant - which the owner blames on a GHOST.



SWNS.com

The bar has had a refurbishment, and then the spooky happenings started

Technically, ghosts don't have the ability to move objects. That's what poltergeists do.

But back to the incident, which happened at 6.55pm on Saturday.

Shaun Deakin, the owner of the restaurant in Wakefield, West Yorks., said it is not the first time ghostly goings on have been reported since he opened three months ago.

He said: "Ever since we did the fit out, there's been a few unusual things going on, all in one area.

It's not the first time supernatural goings on have occurred

"There's champagne glasses in the bar and one day, six of them just came flying out.

"We kind of ignored it but then there was another incident when a member of staff was walking with a tray of glasses. He said he felt like someone smashed the tray from underneath and the glasses went everywhere."



SWNS.com

Other incidents have occurred also.
"We have radios that we use between the front of house and kitchen, with screw dials on top. One day, a staff member went to pick the radio up and the screw at the top was missing.

"As they were looking for it, it was pushed out in front of them."



SWNS.com

"What do I have to do to get a drink round here?"

This most recent occurrence however is the only one to be captured on camera.
"The footage we caught on Saturday was the first time we have got anything on camera.

Shaun continues, "I personally am quite sceptical of things like this but there's no explanation.

"It's a bit creepy and some of the staff have been quite scared."

Since sharing the footage on their Facebook page, Shaun said he has been approached by a paranormal group who plan to search for signs of spirits this week.

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Squirrel attacks at least 3 at Deltona senior center: 'People are bleeding'

clickorlando.com

By Emilee Speck - Digital journalist , Jennifer Ortega - Reporter
Posted: 7:30 PM, November 03, 2016 Updated: 12:06 AM, November 04, 2016

DELTONA, Fla. - At least three people were attacked by a squirrel at a Deltona senior center Thursday afternoon, according to a 911 call obtained by News 6.

A woman called for medical assistance at the senior center on Alabaster Way.

The caller told dispatch at least three people were attacked by a squirrel around 2 p.m. after it got into the activity room.

“It’s jumping on people and biting them and scratching them,” the caller said. “It’s still in there and people are bleeding.”

People can be heard in the background asking each other if they are all right.

“I feel light-headed. I don’t feel good,” a woman said in the background.

During the more than three-minute 911 call, the squirrel was eventually tossed out of the building, but the caller said people required medical assistance.

You can hear people in the background of the call breathing heavily, saying they don't feel well.

“I don’t know if we need an ambulance, but we need some care for people here,” the caller said. “ … The people are bleeding.”

The caller finally said people have gotten to safety, in the office and lobby, after the squirrel was thrown out.

News 6 has reached out to the Volusia County Sheriff’s Office for more information about the squirrel attack.

The condition of the victims are unknown.

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St Peter’s Church Burnley – and Ghostly Pigs

lancashirefolk.com

Posted onSeptember 29, 2016



burnley-st-peters-church

If legend is to be believed, St Peter’s Church should have been built on the spot where the Godly Lane Cross now stands and where religious rites were habitually celebrated. However, night after night the stones set out to build the church were moved from that spot by ghostly pigs, so that the builders were forced to give up and build the church on its present site. On the south side of the church and on the ancient font can be seen carvings of pigs, in memory of this tale. (In truth, the pigs were probably representations of the Paschal Lamb.)

This church was also once the home of a ghostly black dog called Trash. He was said to be huge, with enormous eyes, and although he could be seen, he could never be caught because he would disappear in the blink of an eye. Those who saw Trash were certain to hear of the death of someone close to them, very soon – the damned person’s distance could be guessed from how clearly the boggart dog appeared. His other name, Skriker, comes from an Anglo-Saxon word for crying or screaming and described the noises the beast was said to make.

St Peter’s was also once home to a ghostly organist, according to a letter printed in the Burnley Advertiser, on the 1st September 1855. “Sir – some time has elapsed since our friend visited these upper regions, however, here he is again as lively as ever and most musically inclined. At intervals during the past two days all who live within hearing distance have been entertained to a charming variety of most appropriate (ecclesiastical?) music: we may especially mention as performed ‘con spirits’ O Susanna, Merrily Dance The Quaker’s Wife, and Coal Black Rose. At the moment of my writing this Willikins and His Dinah is pealing forth in tones more dulcet than Mr Robson ever made pretensions to. By inserting this possibly you may be the means of enlarging the Ghost’s audience.”

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Amazing moment stag appears to BREATHE FIRE

16:33, 27 Sep 2016 Updated 16:34, 27 Sep 2016 By benjamin furst

mirror.co.uk



Mercury Press

This is the moment the deer appears to breathe fire

This is the stunning moment a majestic stag appears to BREATHE FIRE during the annual deer rut.

Norman Crisp, 60, had visited Bushy Park in Richmond Upon Thames, London, to see the deer during the mating season, in which males go head-to-head over females.

The dad-of-three was stunned when he realised a beautiful morning shot of a large stag had captured the breath coming from its mouth and the sun's rays through it have it the appearance of red flames.

Norman said: "The stag was shouting at the top of his voice as I was photographing him.

"I only realised what I captured after I got home, I couldn't see the 'fire' on camera. I was absolutely thrilled.



Mercury Press

Photographer Norman Crisp says you have to be careful not to get too close to the wild animals

"What looks like fire is actually the reflection of the sun rising on the air the deer had just breathed out."

The retired Isle of Wight firefighter explains that although deer are beautiful animals to observe, it is important to take precautions as they can be very dangerous.

Norman said: "You have to be careful when photographing deer, you must takes those animals very seriously as they can be very dangerous if you get too close to them.

"I stood about 10 meters away from the animal but a couple of other photographers got a bit too close, the deer really didn't like it and chased them but fortunately the photographers managed to get away in time.

"My friends who are into photography were very impressed by the picture. They all loved the beautiful light on it.

"Wildlife photography is my main hobby, I tend to go out several times a week to photograph the local wildlife."

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Civil War Forensics: The death Stonewall Jackson and the fate of his left arm

strangeremains.com

By strangeremains*on*September 24, 2016 • (0)



Illustration of Stonewall Jackson's deathbed. Image credit: Navel from Wikipedia,

General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia fought the Union's Army of the Potomac, which was commanded by Major General Joseph Hooker, at the Battle of Chancellorsville in Virginia between April 30 and May 6, 1863. The Battle of Chancellorsville is known as one of General Lee's greatest victories of the American Civil War because, despite being massively outnumbered, Lee forced Hooker's army to retreat. But General Lee suffered a significant loss during the battle when one of his most brilliant strategists, General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson, was shot and died shortly after.

General "Stonewall" Jackson was shot in his left arm and right hand at the Battle of Chancellorsville on May 2, 1863. Although the bullets were removed and his left arm was amputated immediately, he died eight days later. Investigators studied the projectiles that were removed from Jackson's body in order to verify who fired the lethal shots. This case is significant because it is one of the earliest applications of ballistic principles in a death investigation.

Thomas Jonathan Jackson (January 21, 1824-May 10, 1863) graduated from West Point in 1846 and fought with the U.S. Army in the Mexican American War. When the American Civil War started in 1861, he trained new recruits for the Confederate Army and was given command of an infantry regiment. "Stonewall" Jackson earned his famous moniker at the First Battle of Bull Run in July of 1861 when the then brigadier general charged his troops forward to reinforce the Confederate defensive line against a Union attack "like a stone wall." Jackson is probably most famous for his Shenandoah Valley Campaign in the spring of 1862 during which he marched his troops more than 650 miles in order to keep the Union Army from attacking the Confederate capital in Richmond, VA.

From April 30 to May 6, 1863, Jackson fought under the command of General Robert E. Lee at the Battle of Chancellorsville. As the fighting started to dwindle at sundown on May 2nd, Jackson and his aids returned to the Confederate lines. As Lee and his men approached, a North Carolina regiment mistook them for Union troops and fired on them. Jackson was hit in his left arm right below the shoulder and in his right hand.1

Dr. Hunter McGuire, the chief surgeon of the Army of Northern Virginia, amputated Stonewall Jackson's left arm in an attempt to save his life. But Jackson died anyway eight days later on May 10, 1863 and McGuire attributed his death to complications from pneumonia.1

The bullets in Jackson's left arm and right hand were removed during surgery and were later examined during an investigation into his death to confirm it was the result of friendly fire. It was noteworthy that the projectiles were round balls fired from a smoothbore musket because there were two categories of muskets used during the Civil War, those with smoothbore barrels and those with rifled barrels. 1,2

A smoothbore weapon does not have rifled grooves etched into the barrel. Smoothbore muskets had a shorter range and were less accurate than their rifled counterparts. Rifling, or spiral grooves etched into the walls of the inside of the barrels, was invented in the 16th century but was not part of widespread gun production until the 19th century. This was an important innovation in firearms manufacture because when a bullet passed through the barrel the rifling caused the bullet to spin, which made the shot more stable and accurate. By the time Jackson was shot, most of the muskets used by the Confederate Army were smoothbore and most rifles used by the Union army had rifled barrels.

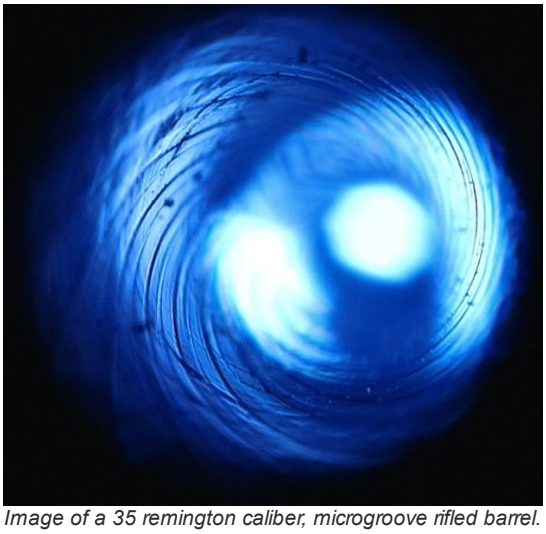


Image of a 35 remington caliber, microgroove rifled barrel. Image credit: Released into the public domain by Rickochet on Wikipedia.

Ballistic analysis eliminated Union troops as the source of the shot and confirmed witness accounts that Jackson was injured by and eventually killed by his own men.

Most of Stonewall Jackson's body was sent to his family in Lexington, VA where it was buried. His left arm, however, was buried in a private cemetery at Ellwood Manor, not far from the Chancellorsville battlefield. According to Ramona Martinez in "The Curious Fate Of Stonewall Jackson's Arm," Union solders exhumed the limb in 1864 and reburied it in an unknown location. Then in 1903, one of Jackson's officers erected a granite headstone at what was thought to be the appendage's final resting place but it's "unclear" if it marks the exact spot or if it is buried nearby.

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Local Store Plagued By Thieving Cat - The Reykjavik Grapevine

grapevine.is



Local Store Plagued By Thieving Cat

Words by
Paul Fontaine

Published October 28, 2016

An area cat has devised a cunning plan for repeatedly stealing Icelandic harðfiskur from a downtown shop.

DV reports that the cat in question, whose name is unknown, spends a lot of time at Krambúð, a small grocery shop in downtown Reykjavík. Unsurprising as well, as the cat follows a tried and tested method for stealing the one thing it apparently craves most of all: harðfiskur, or dried fish fillets.

The cat begins by sitting near the front door to the shop, appearing to all unsuspecting customers to be just another of Reykjavík's many cats. However, once a human blithely opens the door to the shop, that is when the cat makes her move.

Workers at Krambúðin say that once the door is open, the cat makes a dash for the harðfiskur display, grabs a bag and rips it open, dining on as much fish as she can before workers catch her and throw her out. She has reportedly stolen half a dozen bags of the dried fish in this way.

Moreover, the cat brings a great sense of entitlement to her operations. Once caught and set back outside, the cat will meow and whine in protest at the indignity of being separated from her catch.

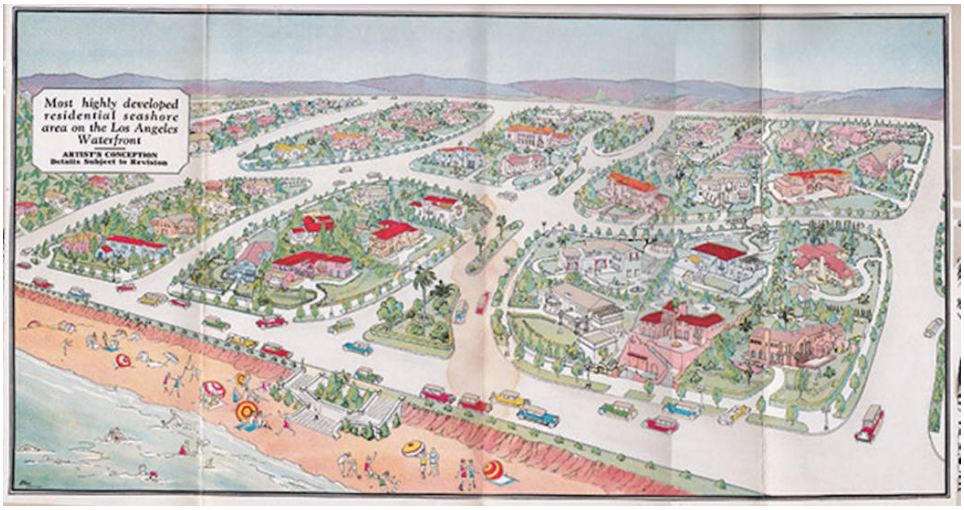
If you plan on paying a visit to Krambúðin, we recommend bringing a couple piece of harðfiskur with you, and leaving it outside as an offering for the cat. Whether this will appease her, or simply encourage her theft, remains to be seen.

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A Ghost Town in the Middle of Los Angeles: The Story of Surfridge

blumhouse.com



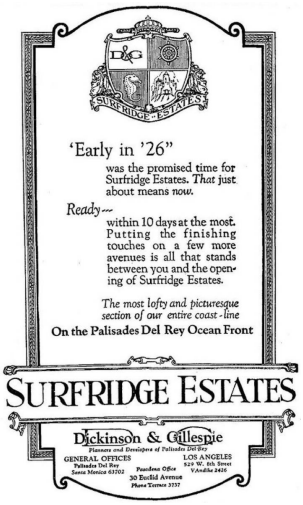
David Ian McKendry

September 14, 2016

Not all ghost towns reside in the middle of nowhere, deep in the forest or surrounded by vast desert plains. Some of them can exist in the heart of a bustling city. These small enclaves, once filled with neighborhood pride, soon resemble a post-apocalyptic wasteland. The town of Surfridge, located in one of Los Angeles's most congested areas, is just such a place.



The neighborhood of Surfridge was built in the 1920's by the development firm of Dickinson & Gillepsie as a beach-front community along a very idyllic stretch of the Pacific Ocean. This three-mile stretch was quickly populated with high-end Spanish style homes, all providing a majestic view of the Ocean. The intent was to offer an exclusive beach neighborhood to Los Angeles's emerging entertainment elite. Celebrities such as Mel Blanc, Cecile B. DeMille, and Charles Bickford were some of the first to call Surfridge home.



Directly to the east of Surfridge was a tiny 640-acre farm with a dirt air strip known as Mines Field. During the 1920's and 30's both celebrities and locals would flock to this parcel of farmland to watch air shows and races, an activity very popular during the period. Then in 1928, the City of Los Angeles decided to transform Mines Field into the city's new airport. The single dirt landing strip was quickly joined by several more, as the field took on its new role.

During the 1930's, Surfridge became an increasingly popular address for Los Angeles's elite. Despite the many fortunes that were lost as a result of the Great Depression (one of Surfridge's first real estate developers was forced to take up residence in a tent on the beach after losing everything) the community itself still continued to grow and prosper. But by the 1950's, all of this would change.

As Surfridge grew so did it's neighbor to the east, Mines Field airport. Now known as Los Angeles International Airport, or LAX, it began taking on more air traffic as the nation officially welcomed in the jet age. By the 1960's Surfridge became near uninhabitable as the latest jumbo jets rained down soot on the community during take-off, the take-off pattern being directly overhead of the once posh neighborhood. In addition to the soot and fuel pollution, residents also found the noise completely unbearable. Then in 1961, the city of Los Angeles began purchasing and



condemning the properties under eminent domain.

Thus began the massive migration from Surfridge. In the early days, those residents who were compensated were able to move their entire homes. Surfridge homes began relocating and popping up all over the city. Those who didn't sell early enough were often stuck in their homes waiting for a hopeful government bailout. The problem was, at the time, the city was only paying market value for homes. This meant that those who sold early were offered a higher buy-out. But when property values plummeted, those who had been waiting longer for compensation were forced to take a minuscule amount.





Many residents simply ended up abandoning their homes, this invited transients and vandals, which further lowered the property values. Some residents even reported seeing people driving into the neighborhood at night to strip the abandoned homes of building materials. By 1986, the last resident of Surfridge had left. However, a new resident quickly took it's place.





1608490_orig

In 1973, the El Segundo Blue Butterfly was the first insect to be officially declared endangered. Once a thriving resident of Surfridge, the butterfly's population quickly decreased when the coastal buckwheat it ate was removed to make way for housing. With the town of Surfridge gone, the concrete slabs that once held the homes of Los Angeles's most wealthy residents, have mostly been removed to make way for plants that will help the butterfly population grow.







In the end, all that remained of Surfridge was a small area of roads, building foundations, and dunes where people gathered to watch the planes. However, this area was closed after shortly after September 11th for security reasons.

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The truth about a strange blood-sucking monster

By Josh Gabbatiss 10 November 2016

bbc.com

BBC A trail of bodies, seemingly left behind by the vampire-like chupacabra, enabled one man to solve the mystery



Everyone loves a good monster story.

The problem is, monsters always insist on living in faraway lands, at the bottom of lakes, or in the depths of forests. While this adds to their mystique, it is little wonder that our knowledge of them comes exclusively from grainy photos and unreliable witness reports.

This is what first drew Benjamin Radford to the chupacabra, a supposedly vampire-like creature. Its roots are in Latin America, but stories about it have since spread to the rest of the world, including his native New Mexico.

"This was a much more local mystery to me," says Radford. "I didn't have to go to Inverness or Borneo, it was right here in my backyard." Helpfully, the chupacabra also seemed to be less shy than your average monster. That meant Radford had a good chance of figuring out whether or not it was real.



Radford's extensive investigation of the mysterious chupacabra was five years long (Credit: Benjamin Radford)

Tales of the chupacabra first emerged in Puerto Rico in the late 1990s. They described a bipedal creature four or five feet tall with large eyes, spikes down its back and long claws. This beast, people claimed, was responsible for killing and draining the blood of livestock, an act that earned it its name – which is Spanish for "goat-sucker".

What is remarkable is how fast the story travelled

In his extensive investigation, which took a total of five years and saw him travel as far as the jungles of Nicaragua, Radford even located the person who first reported this beast: chupacabra patient zero.

Her name is Madelyne Tolentino and she comes from Canóvanas, a town in the east of Puerto Rico. In 1995, she spotted a scary alien-like creature out of her window.

What is remarkable is how fast the story travelled. After more reported sightings, and links made subsequently in the media with livestock that had been found "drained of blood", the legend of the chupacabra spiralled out of control. First it spread around the island, then the rest of Latin America and into the southern US states. It also flourished online, where it was latched onto by UFO enthusiasts and conspiracy theorists.



The chupacabra was described as a hairless dog-like animal (Credit: EyeEm/Alamy)

Then, in the early 2000s, a different chupacabra arrived on the scene. This one shared some of the traits of earlier sightings but was a little less alien. This time it was described as a hairless, dog-like animal walking on four legs.

And unlike most monsters, this type is not based exclusively on sightings. Chupacabra bodies have reportedly been found.

When you have a body, everything changes

When Radford, a research fellow with the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry got wind of this story, he recognised a unique opportunity. Between the dead livestock and the actual specimens, he had the makings of an unprecedented scientific investigation into a creature that had already achieved infamy on a par with Bigfoot or the Loch Ness monster. This was a story he could really get his teeth into.

"When you have a body, everything changes," he explains. "You have DNA samples, you have bone samples, you have morphology." As with all his missions, Radford approached the chupacabra with an open mind, employing what he calls "investigative scepticism", conducting field work, collecting evidence and interviewing witnesses.

"I was of course initially sceptical of the creature's existence," he says. "At the same time I was mindful that new animals have yet to be discovered. I didn't want to just debunk or dismiss it. If the chupacabra is real, I wanted to find it."

Radford and a colleague tracking the elusive beast (Credit: Benjamin Radford)

The obvious place to start was with the chupacabra bodies. These have mostly turned up in Texas and other south-western US states, and Radford has recorded about a dozen in total. They are quite horrific-looking: hairless, with a gaunt appearance and burnt-looking skin.



However, DNA tests revealed a pretty mundane reality. The bodies have invariably turned out to be coyotes, dogs or raccoons – barring one that was actually a fish.

The reason these animals get identified as chupacabras is because they've lost their hair owing to sarcoptic mange

But despite clear DNA evidence, this version of events is a little fishy. The people who found and often shot these creatures were usually ranchers or rural folk who should recognise a coyote when they see one. So where does this confusion come from?

"The reason these animals get identified as chupacabras is because they've lost their hair owing to sarcoptic mange," explains Radford.

Sarcoptic mange is caused by itch-inducing mites called *Sarcoptes scabei* burrowing into the upper layer of the skin. It is very common. Alison Diesel of Texas A&M University, US, who specialises in inflammatory skin conditions in animals, agrees that this disease can be sufficiently gruesome to produce convincing monsters.

"The 'mangy dog' is typically very sparsely haired to near-bald, with red or hyper-pigmented black, thickened skin," she explains. Add to this the self-inflicted wounds from scratching and a hairless body, and you have yourself a "chupacabra".



Animals with mange are gaunt and start to lose their fur (Credit: Nature/Alamy)

Sarcoptes mites are thought to have infested humans for hundreds of thousands of years, but in more recent evolutionary history made the transition to dogs and other similar animals. This could explain why scabies in humans – the minor rash that results from the mites burrowing into our skin – is a relatively trivial affair, whereas in dogs it can cause death. These animals might not have had long enough to evolve an effective immune response to the mites.

Blood feeders are looking for blood that's close to the surface of the skin

But the chupacabras are only half the story. "There are two sets of bodies here," says Radford. There are also the reports of dead livestock. "Something is attacking these things, leaving puncture marks on their neck and supposedly draining their [bodies] of every drop [of blood]. So what's going on there?"

The answer, once again, is surprisingly straightforward. These animals are most likely the victims of ordinary predators, such as dogs or other canids. It is not uncommon for a dog to bite an animal in the neck and then leave it. Quite often the animal will then die from internal haemorrhaging, with no other injuries apart from puncture marks.

And while, thanks to Dracula, puncture marks in the neck tend to be associated with vampires, Bill Schutt of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, US, says unequivocally that this is not how real-world blood-sucking creatures actually behave.

"Blood feeders are looking for blood that's close to the surface of the skin, something not found in a jugular vein for example," he says.



These mites cause mange (Credit: Natural History Museum/Alamy)

In fact, if we compare the characteristics of real blood-feeding animals such as vampire bats with those of the chupacabra, there are hardly any similarities. Vampires, according to Schutt, are small and stealthy, with specialised teeth and digestive systems that allow them to extract nutrients from blood.

A creature the size of a dog "would starve to death pretty quickly on a blood meal," he says, owing to the lack of essential components such as fat.

When an animal dies, the heart and blood pressure stop

Besides the presence of these "tell-tale" bite marks, Radford thinks he knows why worried ranchers might attribute the death of their animals to a blood feeder. Having found a mysterious corpse, they would examine it and perhaps cut into it, expecting blood to spurt out – but they would be surprised.

"When an animal dies, the heart and blood pressure stop," he explains. "The blood seeps to the lowest part of the body, and it coagulates and thickens. It's called lividity, and it gives the illusion that they've been drained of blood."

So if all the mythology surrounding the chupacabra actually comes down to some fairly commonplace natural phenomena, why do the stories live on with such vehemence today?

There have been various descriptions of the chupacabra's appearance (Credit: Jamie Chirinos/SPL)

Bizarrely, Radford says it might have something to do with an anti-US sentiment found across Latin America. This is particularly true in Puerto Rico, which is in the unusual position of being a non-state territory of the US.

"I spoke to several Puerto Ricans who felt that the US had exploited, short-changed, and ignored the island, in economic and many other ways," he says. Most recently, this resentment has played out in the island's ongoing debt crisis.



The original chupacabra had spikes on its back, big eyes… then over the years the idea of what it was became bigger and bigger

As for chupacabras, there are many Puerto Ricans who believe they are another indication of American exploitation and meddling; the result of top secret US scientific experiments taking place in El Yunque rainforest, not far from Tolentino's hometown.

This may be one factor, but the spread of such stories can largely be attributed to the internet.

"I would classify the chupacabra as the first internet monster," says Radford. "If the first sighting had been in 1985, a couple of people would have heard of it, but it wouldn't have gone viral and spread across the world."

Radford points out that the myth has changed rapidly. "The original chupacabra had spikes on its back, big eyes," he says. "Then over the years the idea of what it was became bigger and bigger until you have any mangy dog being called a chupacabra. Now, people go on Google and search 'mysterious animal attacking things'. It's self-perpetuating."



Inspiration for the original sighting could have come from the film Species (Credit: United Archives GmbH/Alamy)

But what about those initial sightings? Having explained away the mysterious specimens and how they might operate, what does Radford think inspired Tolentino to come up with such a story in the first place?

The answer is unexpected. Radford noticed that Tolentino's 1995 description was similar to the alien from the 1995 movie *Species*, which had recently been released in Puerto Rico and which she had watched. The film was set in the present day, revolves around top-secret US scientific experiments, and was partly filmed in Puerto Rico.

> The whole story is a perfect storm of scientific misunderstanding

"It's all there. She sees the movie, then later she sees something she mistakes for a monster," says Radford. While he is careful to clarify that he does not think any witnesses are lying, he does

suggest that this sighting could simply be a result of an overactive imagination.

Even today, while it is difficult to assess the extent to which people still believe the chupacabra myth, it remains a widely-discussed monster, not only in Puerto Rico but also the rest of the world. In recent years, chupacabras have been reported as far afield as Russia and the Philippines.

"From my perspective there is absolutely no reason to believe that anything out of the ordinary is involved in the attacks on livestock," says Radford. Instead, the whole story is a perfect storm of scientific misunderstanding, misidentification of animals, media hype, cultural anxiety and mass hysteria, all potentially resulting from one woman's viewing of a film.

It goes to show, you can do all the rigorous analysis you want, all the investigation, all the science. At the end of the day, humans like stories and will continue to tell them, however peculiar or far-fetched.

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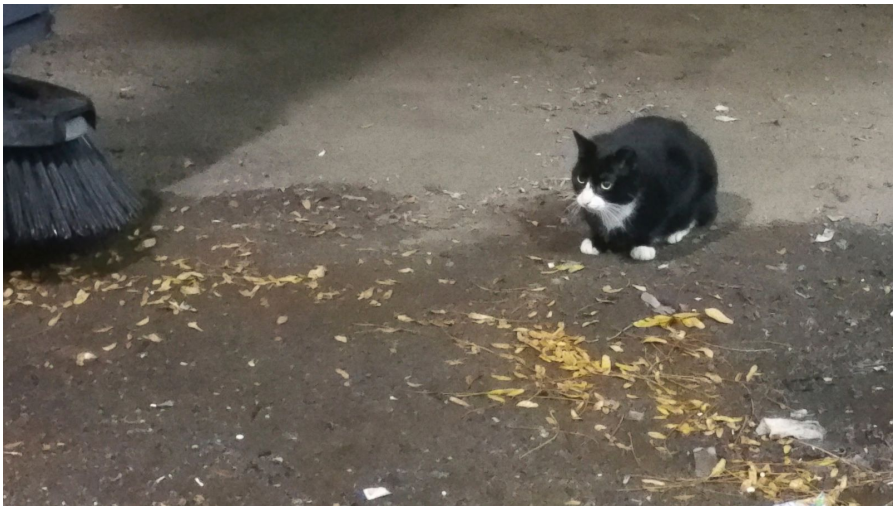
Stray Cat Patrol: Feral Felines Deployed in NYC War on Rats

2016-10-22 go.com

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- By verena dobnik, associated press

NEW YORK — Oct 22, 2016, 4:45 PM ET



The Associated Press

Multitudes of feral cats roam New York City's concrete jungle, and some now have a practical purpose: They're helping curb the city's rat population.

A group of volunteers trained by the NYC Feral Cat Initiative traps wild cat colonies that have become a nuisance or been threatened by construction, then spays or neuters and vaccinates them. The goal is to return them to their home territory, but some end up in areas rife with rats.

Feline rat patrols keep watch over city delis and bodegas, car dealerships and the grounds of a Greenwich Village church. Four cats roam the loading dock at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, where food deliveries and garbage have drawn rodents for years.

"We used to hire exterminators, but nature has a better solution," said Rebecca Marshall, the sustainability manager at the 1.8-million-square-foot center. "And cats don't cost anything."

About 6,000 volunteers have completed workshops where they've learned proper ways to trap cats.

The program is run through the privately funded Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, a coalition of more than 150 animal rescue groups and shelters. It estimates as many as half a million feral and stray cats roam New York's five boroughs.

The life of a street cat is a tough one. Some are former pets, abandoned by owners. Plenty die of disease and malnutrition or are hit by vehicles. Others ingest poisoned cat food — set deliberately to get rid of them, cat advocates say.

Many of the animals are displaced as a result of New York's development, with new construction creating perilous conditions for those that once inhabited the city's nooks and crannies, from vacant lots, decaying factories and empty warehouses.

One colony of two dozen cats living in a lot on Manhattan's West Side are about to be displaced by construction on a new $3 billion office tower. A City Council member is working with residents and developers to make sure the creatures are moved to a safe location.

The Javits Center's quartet of cats — Sylvester, Alfreda, Mama Cat and Ginger — were lured to its 56 loading docks about two years ago with pet food brought by animal-loving employees. On a recent fall morning, Sylvester stationed himself next to a commercial truck, ready to pounce if needed.

The cats are predators but don't necessarily kill rats. Instead, experts say the feline scent and droppings repel the rodents.

"A mother rat will never give birth near a predator because the cats would eat the babies," said Jane Hoffman, president of the mayor's alliance.

The cat population is controlled through spaying and neutering, provided free of charge by the Humane Society of New York and the ASPCA. In most cases, adoption is out of the question for feral cats because they are just too wild to be domesticated.

Thanks to the volunteers, says Marshall, "we're protecting wildlife in the city, and the cats get a second chance at life."

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Students Possessed By Animal Spirits In Mass Hysteria Episodes In Negri Sembilan School

16

malaysiandigest.com

Students Possessed By Animal Spirits In Mass Hysteria Episodes In Negri Sembilan School

Published on Friday, 11 November 2016 17:32



JEMPOL: A school in Negeri Sembilan has been shrouded with mystery over a series of unexplained cases of animal-like hysteria in the past few months.



Pic: Kosmo!

Students from Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Pasoh 3 in Jempol, in particular those in standard three, four, five and six have been overcome by mass hysteria in the morning almost daily since last August.



Pic: Kosmo!

What is even more mysterious is the 'possessions' almost always happens exactly at 9:15am in the morning.

To make matters worst, the students who experienced the hysteria displayed animal-like behaviour which observers notice are similar to the antics of the tiger, such as scratching walls and a tendency to launch into feline-like fights among themselves every time the hysteria overcomes them.

The situation has traumatised the 24 teachers and 237 students of the school in having to deal with unexplained phenomena almost daily.

The President of SK Pasoh 3 Parents - Teachers Association, Yusof Mas Muda said that the mass hysteria episodes initially began when one of the female students complained of a stomach ache during recess on 5 August.

"The student was overcome attacked by hysteria. The situation then spread to the other students almost daily."

Kosmo! reports that a group of representatives from Negeri Sembilan Education Department had visited the school yesterday morning to begin investigations over the incident.

- *mD*

Malaysian Digest

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Dunelm suspect 'stuffed stolen Venetian blind in trousers' - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC



Image

Police said the blind was concealed down a trouser leg and jacket

copyrightNorthamptonshire Police

A would-be thief has been caught on camera apparently trying to make off with a Venetian blind - by stuffing it down one trouser leg and up his jacket.

CCTV images show a man in the lift of a branch of Dunelm Mill attempting to conceal the stolen item.

Staff from the shop in Nene Valley Retail Park, Northampton, followed the alleged shoplifter to a nearby canal path, where the blind was abandoned.

Northamptonshire Police is urging those with information to come forward.

A spokesman said: "A man entered the store and allegedly concealed a Venetian blind down one trouser leg and up the back of his jacket.

"He then left the store making no attempt to pay for the item."

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Image copyright Northamptonshire Police

Supposed 'Burial Slab' Of Jesus Christ Uncovered For First Time In Centuries

huffingtonpost.com

The slab had been encased in marble since at least 1555.

10/26/2016 11:47 pm ET
Ed Mazza Overnight Editor



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where a stone slab said to have held the body of Jesus Christ has been uncovered for the first time in centuries.

Maremagnum via Getty Images

A stone slab that many Christians believe once held the body of Jesus Christ after the crucifixion has been unveiled for the first time in centuries.

National Geographic, which was filming the restoration work at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, said the marble that encased the slab since at least 1555 was removed as part of the project.

“We were surprised by the amount of fill material beneath it,” Fredrik Hiebert, archaeologist-in-residence at the National Geographic Society, told the organization’s website. “It will be a long scientific analysis, but we will finally be able to see the original rock surface on which, according to tradition, the body of Christ was laid.”

The church is one of the most revered sites in Christianity, and includes the location traditionally believed to have been the scene of the crucifixion as well as the tomb. It’s also highly controversial, as the location was not identified until centuries after the events depicted in the New Testament.

Today, the operation and maintenance of the church is a tense, “status quo” arrangement between several Christian denominations, including the Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. At times, fights have broken out between these sects. Such disagreements have allowed parts of the facility to fall into disrepair, and last year the Israeli government temporarily shut down the church over fears of a possible collapse.

Earlier this year, the factions agreed to a nine-month renovation to fix the crumbling chapel that was built over the revered site, and to make other long-overdue repairs. Removing the marble that encased the slab was part of that process, and will be featured in a National Geographic Channel “Explorer” episode in November.

“We are at the critical moment for rehabilitating the Edicule” (which encloses the tomb), Antonia Moropoulou of the the National Technical University of Athens told National Geographic. “The techniques we’re using to document this unique monument will enable the world to study our findings as if they themselves were in the tomb of Christ.”

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Real life 'Indiana Jane' surfs over six million skeletons in Paris

dailymail.co.uk

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

- **A plucky daredevil surfer is thought to have become the first person to surf in the Catacombs of Paris**
- **Alison Teal took her surfboard 150 metres underground to surf in the largest grave in the world**
- **To reach the correct spot she had to creep over scores of bones and then strip down to her bikini to surf**
- **Her father is a wildlife photographer and took her travelling on expeditions across the world in her youth**

By Simon Holmes For Mailonline

Published: 12:38 EDT, 30 October 2016 | Updated: 04:10 EDT, 31 October 2016

These nail-biting images show an intrepid surfer in the forbidden parts of the world's largest grave.

Real-life Indiana Jane, Alison Teal, 30, from Hawaii, USA, took her bright pink board 150 metres underground to surf with around six million skeletons in the Catacombs of Paris.

It is believed Alison became the first person to complete the surfing expedition when she went underground on October 13.

Scroll down for video



Intrepid: Alison Teal, 30, took her pink board some 150 metres underground to surf with around six million skeletons in Paris

Pushing the boundaries: The surfer stripped down to her bikini as she negotiated the narrow tunnels in the Catacombs

Inspiration: Alison likens herself to the female version of adventurer Indiana Jones and has completed several expeditions

Secret spot: The Hawaiian native climbed down a drain and crawled through piles of human bones in the middle of the night



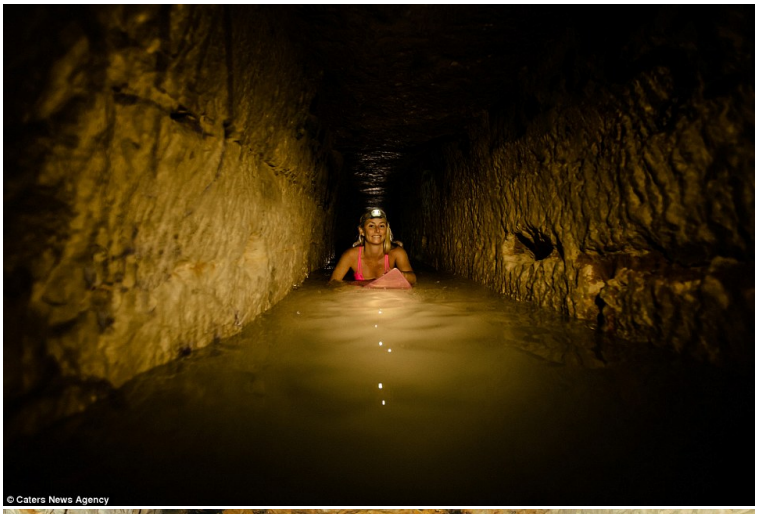
Exploration: Alison, who is also a filmmaker, spent hours in the caves, describing the conditions as 'suffocating'

Alison, who is also film-maker, said: 'I grew up listening to my father telling me stories about the catacombs on Halloween.

'We were taken down this secret passage way. It was very James Bond style.

'We were in the caves for ages, it was day light when we came back up.'

She added: 'The caves got narrower and narrower until we were crawling on all fours to get through. It was so suffocating, there was minimal oxygen and you couldn't see far.'



After snapping the stunning shots, Alison and her team were shocked to realise the water level had risen.

She said: 'After we took the paddling shots we couldn't go back the way we came.

'We had to go through the water to the other side to get out.



Cramped: Lighting the way with a head torch, Alison crawled on her hands and knees over piles of bones in the tunnels

Eerie: Alison described how it 'suddenly got crunchy' and she looked down to see she was crawling on skeletons

Atmospheric: The tunnel lit with a head torch and hand held torch, the Alison is photographed surfing one of the tunnels

Precautions: Alison prepared extensively for the expedition in Paris and was accompanied by expert cavers

Extreme conditions: Experienced surfer Alison said the 'freezing' water was some of the 'coldest she had been in'

'In the end we all had to swim through it and there was just a little gap at the top of the chamber to breathe.





'It was terrifying. I had to stop filming, it just became about survival.

'By the end we were just shaking.'

Alison went with expert cavers as guides and warned others not to attempt this adventure, even if you're a survival expert. She also said that a lot preparation went into this mission.

This is not the first crazy stunt the traveler has pulled off. The daughter of a wildlife photographer and naturalist has traveled to over 40 different countries across the world and was home schooled-not seeing the inside of a classroom until she was seven years old.

Risk taker: The surfer described the underground burial site as a 'maze' and said 'just one wrong turn and you'd be lost'



Burial site: The surfer pauses for a break during the hours-long adventure, sitting on what appears to be a pile of bones

Pioneer: The surfer is believed to be the first person to surf in the world's largest underground grave

Expedition: The catacombs in Paris hold the remains of over six million people from previous centuries

The adrenaline junkie revealed that one of her most memorable moments was her discovery of an ancient burial in Peru.

She said: 'In 2008 I teamed up with wild Peruvian pro surfer 'Octopus' for a surf adventure down the desolate coastline.



'While searching for a secret surf break we discovered an ancient burial in the sand dunes as the pre Incans buried their elite at the top of the dunes near the ocean.

'The mummy inside was laden with his possessions for the afterlife including a solid gold nose piece in the form of a surfer and a carved wooden paddle inlaid with precious stones.'

Uncovered: During her travels, Alison was lucky enough to happen upon a 3,000 year old pre-Incan mummy



Brave: Alison has also conquered the popular US TV show, Naked and Afraid, which is broadcast on Discovery

Comments (1980

The comments below have not been moderated.

Thegoldgoat1, Gillingham, United Kingdom, 19 hours ago

I can't be the only person who finds this massively disrespectful...many of those bones are children who died of disease and famine.

kaanaismyfriend, Bangalore, India, 23 hours ago

She is a adventurer & she does go anyplace on earth to suit her nature.

kaanaismyfriend, Bangalore, India, 23 hours ago

She is a adventurer & she does go anyplace on earth to suit her nature.

Lana the Redhead, Sydney, Australia, 1 day ago

Yes, a pink bikini is the most sensible choice for surfing the underground tombs of Paris. Perfectly logical, I mean why would you wear a wetsuit .... ? This woman is abhorrent and deserves to be fined for disrespecting the resting place of many souls in this crass manner, climbing over bones etc...



Me, Here, 1 day ago

I don't know much about surfing, but from what I do know... to quote Jasper from the Simpsons... that's a paddlin'!

Sheepleherder, San Jose, 1 day ago

"Surf"? Isn't there supposed to be "surf" when you surf?

DisillusionedCitizen, Bath, United Kingdom, 1 day ago

So, basically, a US citizen decides to film herself









disrespecting millions of French corpses in order to show her boobs and bum off and the DM decides this is newsworthy. Have I got that right or missed anything?

Jax Teller, London, United Kingdom, 1 day ago

lool like those movies where the guy gets his hand stuck and has to cut it off, at your own risk applies here.....wonder if she can climb, shoot and hijack a plane like nathan drake and bear grylls

Capt. Kool, Smokey Mountain, United Kingdom, 1 day ago

A cross between Indiana Jones and Lara Croft?

Paul, Asuncion, 1 day ago

Hey, Indiana girl, there are hundreds of huge cemeteries filled with millions of war-dead all over Europe. Why not go roller-skating all over them?



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Head transplant surgeon plans 'Frankenstein' test to reanimate corpses

04:48 EST, 20 September 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com
MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

EXCLUSIVE: Doctor planning world's first head transplant says he is preparing for his 'Frankenstein' surgery by REANIMATING human corpses

- **Dr Sergio Canavero plans to do the first human head transplant next year**
- **His team now plan to conduct 'Frankenstein' tests using human corpses**
- **They will use electricity to stimulate the nerves in dead bodies after first cutting and then reconnecting the spinal cord as a test of their technique**
- **Russian man who has volunteered to have the first transplant has also revealed that his girlfriend is opposed to him having the operation**

By Richard Gray for MailOnline

A controversial neurosurgeon who wants to carry out the first human head transplant has outlined plans to conduct 'Frankenstein' experiments to reanimate human corpses to test his technique.

Dr Sergio Canavero, director of the Turin Advanced Neuromodulation Group, and his collaborators believe they may be able to conduct the first human head transplant next year.

They have outlined plans to test whether it is possible to reconnect the spinal cord of a head to another body with tests that will stimulate the nervous system in fresh human corpses with electrical pulses.

However, the Russian man who has volunteered to have the first transplant has also revealed that his girlfriend is opposed to him having the operation.

Scroll down for video



Dr Sergio Canavero plans to conduct tests on human corpses before performing a human head transplant next year. Russian Valery Spiridonov has volunteered to be the first person to have the operation (pictured right with Dr Canavero, centre, on Good Morning Britain)

The aim of the surgery is to first cut the spinal cord and then repair it before using electrical or magnetic stimulation to 'reanimate' the nerves and even movement in the corpse.

In an article for the Surgical Neurology International, Dr Canavero and his colleague in South Korea and China drew parallels to the infamous story of Frankenstein, where electricity is used to reanimate the fictional monster.

He pointed to experiments conducted in the 1800s using the corpses of criminals who had been hung as proof such tests could be successful.

Dr Canavero and his colleagues said: 'A fresh cadaver might act as a proxy for a live subject as long as a window of opportunity is respected (a few hours).

Dr Sergio Canavero (pictured) has revealed he and his colleagues will first conduct tests using fresh human corpses that they will 'reanimate' using electrical pulses to test if the spinal cord can be reconnected



GIRLFRIEND OPPOSES PATIENT'S HEAD TRANSPLANT PLAN

The man who has volunteered to undergo the first human head transplant in the world has said his girlfriend does not want him to have the controversial surgery.

Valery Spiridonov suffers from a genetic disorder that means he is wheelchair bound and physically unable to take care of himself without constant assistance.

He has offered to be the first to undergo the controversial procedure proposed by Dr Sergio Canavero which would see him being decapitated and then his head being reattached to a donors body.

But Mr Spiridonov told ITV's Good Morning Britain that his girlfriend is opposed to the operation.

He said: 'She supports me in all what I do, but she doesn't think that I need to change, she accepts me the way I am. She doesn't think that I need the surgery.

'My motivation personally is about improving my own life conditions and to go to the stage where I will be able to take care of myself, where I will be independent from other people.

'I need people to help me everyday, even twice a day because I need someone to take me off my bed and put me in my wheelchair, so it makes my life pretty dependable on other people and if there will be a way to change this I believe it should be tried.'

'It also implies that the process of deathly disintegration is not an immediate process. We name this effect the "Frankenstein effect".

It comes as Dr Canavero and his colleagues have announced the results of experiments to show they can reconnect the spinal cord after it was severed in a dog.

A series of research papers published today detail how the animal was able to walk and wag its tail three weeks after being paralysed from the neck down.

Dr Canavero claims the results prove the technique used, known as GEMINI spinal cord fusion, will also work in humans to fuse two ends of a spinal cord together.

This could then be used to connect a transplanted head to a donor body, allowing a paralysed patient regain control of a body.



Valery Spiridonov (pictured) hopes to be the first person to undergo a head transplant but he has revealed that his girlfriend is opposed to him having the operation

Valery Spiridonov, a 30-year-old Russian computer programmer suffering from a form of spinal muscular atrophy called Werdnig-Hoffmann, has volunteered to undergo the surgery.

CRITICS OPPOSE PROPOSED HEAD TRANSPLANTS

Critics say Dr Canavero's plans are 'pure fantasy'.

The Italian has been compared to the fictional gothic-horror character Dr Frankenstein and Arthur Caplan, the director of medical ethics at New York University's Langone Medical Centre, has described Dr Canavero as 'nuts'.

Dr Hunt Batjer, president elect of the American Association for Neurological Surgeons, told CNN: 'I would not wish this on anyone. I would not allow anyone to do it to me as there are a lot of things worse than death.'

However, the claims have been met with scepticism by many in the scientific community who warn the experiments in animals do not yet prove a head transplant will work in humans.

It is unclear exactly how completely the dog's spinal cord was severed before it was treated and its injury is some way from having a total head transplant.

Writing in the journal Surgical Neurology International, Dr Canavero said the results of the experiments should dispel the hysteria around full head transplants 'once and for all'.

He said: 'While of course these results are in need of duplication, there can be no doubt that this new batch of data confirm that a spinal cord, once severed, can be refused with useful behavioral recovery.

'Despite these exciting animal experiments, the proof of the pudding rests in human studies.'

He said that initial tests will be carried out using the bodies of brain dead organ donors where the spinal cord will be severed and treated to see if it can be repaired.



Dr Canavero's plans for a human head transplant (Dr Canavero posing in a photoshoot) have met with criticism from many scientists and his plans remain controversial. He insists, however, the research could help patients with spinal cord injuries

He explained how techniques, such as electrically stimulating movements through the spinal cord or with magnets applied to the brain, known as transcranial magnetic stimulation, will be used to test the connections.

If the spinal cord has reconnected, such stimulation should produce tiny electrical pulses in the nerves further beneath the point where the spinal cord was cut.

Dr Canavero said: 'We believe this has a neuropathological basis.'

He first announced his plans to conduct head – or body – transplant in 2013 and he in 2015 he believed the challenges involved were surmountable.

Together with colleagues in South Korea, China and the US, he set up the head anastomosis venture, or HEAVEN, project to develop the techniques needed to carry out such an operation.

Earlier this year, Dr Canavero claimed scientists in China had performed a head transplant on a monkey where they connected up the blood supply between the head and the new body.

Earlier this year researchers in China announced they had performed a head transplant on a monkey, reattaching the blood supply from the head of one monkey to the body of another (pictured). They did not, however, attempt to reattach the spinal cord

Valery Spiridonov suffers from a genetic disorder that has left him wheelchair bound. He told Good Morning Britain (pictured) that he hopes having a head transplant will allow him to regain his independence

In a newly published paper, scientists from South Korea claimed to have severed the spinal cord of a dog before injecting it with the PEG solution (pictured). They say the dog regained the ability to walk and wag its tail within



three weeks

They did not, however, reconnect the spinal cord and the animal was unable to regain movement.

Dr XiaoPing Ren, a neurosurgeon in China who Dr Canavero claimed had conducted the work later said it could be some time before the first transplant in humans will be carried out.

Speaking last year he said that experiments in rats have only had a 30 per cent to 50 per cent survival rate.

He told Xinhuanet.com: 'Some rats survived a few hours, the longest is one day.'



In a new set of papers published in the journal Surgical Neurology International and edited by Dr Canavero, researchers in South Korea and the US claim to have reconnected the spinal cords in mice and in a dog.

Dr C-Yoon Kim, a neurosurgeon at Konkuk University in Seoul who has been collaborating with Dr Canavero, severed the spinal cords of 16 mice.



Dr Canavero (pictured) said the first operation on a human would only be carried out once surgeons were sure there was a 90 per cent chance of success. They hope to test some of the techniques needed to reconnect the spinal cord using fresh human cadavers

They injected a chemical called polyethylene glycol (PEG) into the gap between the cut spinal cord in half of the mice.

After four weeks, five of the eight mice who received PEG regained some ability to move but three of the mice died. Those who did not receive PEG also died.

Similar tests using an enhanced version of PEG was given to five rats with severed spinal cords and the South Korean researchers showed electrical signals passed down it after treatment.

However, four of the rats were killed in a flood at the team's laboratory and so they were not able to see if movement was restored.

HOW TO TRANSPLANT A HUMAN HEAD

Dr Sergio Canavero and his colleagues have set up the head anastomosis venture, or HEAVEN, project to develop the techniques needed to perform a head transplant.

A new body would need to be obtained from a transplant donor who has been declared brain dead.



Using an ultra-sharp blade, the head of both patient and donor would need to be severed a the same time to give a clean cut.

The patient's head would then be attached to the donor body with the help of a solution known as polyethylene gylcol.

This would be injected between the two ends of the spinal cord to help them fuse together.

Muscles and the blood supply would be stitched together while the patient is put into a coma to allow them to heal.

During that time the patient would be given small electric shocks to stimulate their spinal cord and strengthen the connections between their head and new body.

As the patient is brought out of their medically-induced coma, it is hoped they would be able to move, feel their face, and even speak with the same voice.

Powerful immunosuppressant drugs would need to be prescribed, however, to stop the new body from being rejected.

It is also likely that the patient would require intensive psychological support.

In a final experiment the South Korean team tested the PEG solution in a dog after it's spinal cord was almost completely severed. They claim 90 per cent of the cord had been severed.

While the dog was initially paralysed, three days later the team report it was able to move its limbs. By three weeks it could walk and wag its tail. There was no control in the experiments.

According to New Scientist, however, other scientists have raised serious concerns about the results.

Dr Jerry Silver, a neuroscientist at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, told the magazine: 'These papers do not support moving forward in humans.

'They claim they cut the cervical cord 90 per cent but there's no evidence of that in the paper, just some crude pictures.'



Dr Canavero has described his plans to take advantage of the 'Frankenstein effect' where the muscles of a dead body can be reanimated using electrical or magnetic stimulation. He says he hopes this could be used to test the techniques to reconnect the spinal cord

Others said it could still at least eight years before a human head transplant could realistically be carried out.

Speaking on ITV's Good Morning Britain, however, Dr Canavero said his team intended to conduct experiments on dead bodies before attempting ahead transplant with Valery Spiridonov.

He said the operation on a living patient would only go ahead when there was at least a 90 per cent chance of them surviving the procedure.

He said: 'The first humans to receive this sort of head transplant will not be Valery, but we will just be performing the first on brain dead organ donors, so the first live head transplant will come about somewhere where we'll be able to transfer the head of a brain dead organ donor onto the body of a decapitated, brain dead organ donor.

'So only after extensive cadaveric rehearsals and this final proof of principle surgery on brain dead organ donors we will move on Valery.

'Actually the list of patients is so long that we can't actually begin to give you all the names including several patients from England.'

However, his plans to 'reanimate' corpses will doubtless require ethical approval and may pose a barrier to the experiments.



Comments ()

Mrs O., Welford, United Kingdom, 32 minutes ago

I dont get it ? whats wrong with the head he already has ?

Promidi, Adelaide, 36 minutes ago

This looks like its going to be the makings of one big elaborate hoax....

Charles101, stockport, 37 minutes ago

Stop playing GOD !!!!!

Pnkpnthr2015, Sandhurst, United Kingdom, 41 minutes ago

This is all very creepy stuff - not sure I want to know about it unless it is a complete success. I can't begin to imagine the complications if anything should go wrong.

Joe Joey, Jacksonville, United States, about an hour ago

don't do

Voice for the masses, London, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Does this mean we can live for ever ? I suppose soon Amazon will be selling designer heads and body's !!!!

Insouciant, Princeton, United States, about an hour ago

I don't know about this .... this may be something we should leave alone.

phoenixgoldfire, Newcastle, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Cool

, Newcastle, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Cool

Okletmejustsay2016, liverpool, United Kingdom, about an hour ago

Wish him all the best.. this could be a blessing for people who have had to live difficult lives due to disabilities.

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Cops Catch Police-Impersonating Robbers And Suspect Who Yodeled, Made Death Threats On Police Radio

gothamist.com

by David Colon in News on Sep 30, 2016 4:00 pm



093016fakecops.jpg

Part of the equipment haul police said they recovered from three men accused of robbing people by impersonating cops. (via NYPD)

For most of September, police have been on the lookout for two men who were impersonating police officers to pull over drivers and rob them. And in August, in a seemingly unrelated case, the NYPD began searching for someone who was yodeling and making prank calls and death threats over their radio frequency. Today investigators announced that one arrest this weekend netted all of the suspects in both cases.

The September robbery spree included three more robberies that stretched into this weekend, in which the men came away with cash, a bike and a victim's Samsung Galaxy. After police responded to a robbery in Queens on Sunday, September 25th, officers found the white van that the suspects were allegedly using in all of their robberies, parked on 14th Street and 37th Avenue in Queens.

According to police, Officers Christina McDonald and Dwight Wander then saw a man who matched the description of one of the suspects walking into the 21st Street-Queensbridge F stop. After stopping the man, identified as 29-year-old Ricardo Torres of Harlem, Officers McDonald and Wander found him in possession of two radios that could transmit on police frequencies and a flashlight with the word "Police" inscribed on it.

After determining that Jay Peralta, a 20-year-old Corona resident, and Keven Remache, a 19-year-old resident of Washington Heights, were the other two suspects in the string of robberies, police searched Torres's apartment. There, they found 15 portable radios, 9 scanners, 9 hand-held microphones, 4 speakers, 2 roof antennas and 1 amplifier.

Police say that Torres is "a ham radio enthusiast" who had provided Peralta and Remache with two-way radios. Police also pegged Peralta as the man who, beginning in April of this year, made a string of unauthorized broadcasts on NYPD radio frequencies in which he falsely reported an officer being shot in the Bronx, threatened the life of a captain in the Midtown South Precinct, and yodeled.

All three men were hit with a litany of charges, including multiple counts of robbery and criminal impersonation. In addition, Peralta was charged with four counts of making terroristic threats, seven counts of reckless endangerment, seven counts of obstructing governmental administration, five counts of making false incident reports and two counts of aggravated harassment.

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Swingers' club bans clowns from Halloween orgy

ottawasun.com

Ottawa Sun
Postmedia Network

First posted: Thursday, October 20, 2016 10:33 AM EDT | Updated: Thursday, October 20, 2016 11:25 AM EDT



Kitzi Klown.

A British swingers' club is kiboshing clowns attending its annual Halloween orgy.

Paradise Spa in London is advertising the group sex extravaganza instructing lusty couples to wear their sexy costumes, the Daily Mirror reports.

But there is one exception -- no jaunty jesters. Clown costumes are forbidden.

"Join the Staff and regulars for this years Halloween Party, fancy dress with a prize for the best! PLEASE NOTE, CLOWN COSTUMES ARE NOT PERMITTED AND WILL BE TURNED AWAY."

Whoa!

The sin bin claims it has a fully stocked bar, a big screen that shows porn non-stop, hot tubs and sex rooms. It offers free pizza on weekends.

Meanwhile, porn site xHamster says that people prowling for sex-rated clown action is on the rise.

The website reports that searches for clown porn has climbed by a whopping 50%. There are orgies featuring clowns, BDSM with clowns and every other kind of hardcore you can think of -- all starring clowns.

And the Daily Star is reporting that prostitutes have seen a spike in johns requesting kinky clown related services. But the escorts themselves are wary.

"I've had guys asking for girls to dress as clowns and guys asking if they can be dressed as clowns during meetings," a madam told the tabloid.

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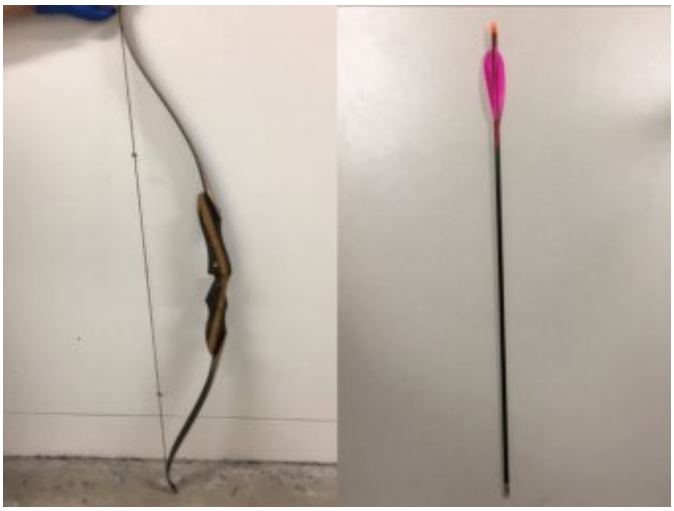
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Man under investigation 'after shooting home intruder with arrow'

Sun at 11:55am Sun 6 Nov 2016, 11:55am

abc.net.au

ABC News



Updated Sun at 8:09pmSun 6 Nov 2016, 8:09pm

Police are investigating a south-west Sydney man who allegedly shot a home intruder with a bow and arrow.

The 68-year-old man shot the intruder after confronting him at his home on Glanara Court at Wattle Grove yesterday afternoon, police said.

Officers said the unknown man broke into a couple's home on Glanara Street in Wattle Grove and stole a large amount of cash, a handbag and car keys.

The man then went to the garage of the home and entered the couple's vehicle, a Nissan X-Trail.

As he started the car and attempted to reverse out of the garage, the male resident — at home with his wife during the robbery — armed himself with a bow and arrow and went to the garage.

The resident confronted the robber with the bow and arrow, causing him to crash the vehicle into a fence, police said.

The intruder then got out of the car and jumped a fence into Wattle Grove Drive, running towards a parked Mazda Tribute.

As he ran away, the resident stood up on the fence and shot the fleeing man using the bow and arrow, hitting him in the bottom or lower back area, police said.

The intruder — who was wearing a black, short-sleeved shirt — escaped, driving off in the parked car.

Police were called and attended a short time later.



Photo: The intruder allegedly drove a stolen car into a fence when confronted by the homeowner. (ABC News: Jessica Kidd)

Police warn public not to approach intruders

Detective Inspector Dean Johnstone said police were still hunting for the intruder and were also investigating the circumstances in which the arrow was fired.

"At this point in time we have been given information by the homeowner, police have attempted to speak to him," he said.

"He's maintained his right to silence, this is a matter we'll investigate."

A crime scene was established and examined by forensic specialists. The bow and arrow and other items were seized by police as exhibits.

The bow and arrow are not prohibited weapons, but Detective Inspector Johnstone suggested there was a possibility the man could face charges.

"The owner is part of an archery club and takes part in that sport," he said.

"This is very early days in the investigation but … we are investigating all facets of the incident."

Detective Inspector Johnstone advised people not to confront intruders, following the unusual incident.

"My advice to people would be to comply with [the intruder], not to confront them, certainly not to engage them in a physical altercation, let them go and let us investigate," he said.

Doctors asked to look out for unusual injuries

Police said inquiries with hospitals had yet to locate anyone treated for an injury consistent with this incident.

The man who broke into the home is described as being short and of Caucasian appearance with dark hair and olive skin. He has a tattoo on the left arm above the elbow.

He is believed to be between 30 to 35 years old.

Detective Inspector Johnstone said police were asking doctors and medical professionals to look out for anyone with unusual injuries.

"We believe the arrow may have struck the offender in the buttocks or the lower back region," he said.

"We'are asking anyone in the medical profession … to contact police if a person comes in with a wound [consistent] with an arrow striking them."

AEDT = Australian Eastern Daylight Savings Time which is 11 hours ahead of UTC (Greenwich Mean Time)

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‘Paranormal investigators’ tell tales of Bridgewater Triangle

tauntongazette.com

TAUNTON DAILY GAZETTE
The Taunton Daily Gazette, Taunton, MA

Monday

Posted Oct 10, 2011 at 12:01 AM Updated Oct 10, 2011 at 10:06 AM

Ghost hunting isn't just for TV shows anymore. Two local "paranormal investigators" gave a presentation on the legendary Bridgewater Triangle on Sunday at the Dighton Rock Museum, explaining the history of the triangle and the stories that continue to circulate about curses, mysterious orbs of light and fire, haunted grave sites and ghosts.

Ghost hunting isn’t just for TV shows anymore.

Two local “paranormal investigators” gave a presentation on the legendary Bridgewater Triangle on Sunday at the Dighton Rock Museum, explaining the history of the triangle and the stories that continue to circulate about curses, mysterious orbs of light and fire, haunted grave sites and ghosts.

“It’s the strange happenings that go on within the area that earned it its name,” said John Brightman, of the group New England Paranormal Research.

Brightman explained that a writer named Loren Coleman declared the area “the Bridgewater Triangle” in the early 1980s, naming it after “the Bermuda Triangle,” a popular term describing an area of ocean in which boats and planes have been mysteriously lost. The most northern tip of the Bridgewater Triangle is Abington, and the bottom two corners are the most southwest point of Rehoboth and the most southeast point of Freetown, Brightman said.

A ledge in Freetown State Forest

Brightman, a Berkley resident, told a crowd of about 50 guests that one of the most haunted places in the Bridgewater Triangle is a ledge in the Freetown State Forest. He said Native American tribes in the area used the ledge as a lookout, but cursed the area when they were attacked during King Philip’s War.

Brightman recounted an urban legend regarding the ledge, about how a girl killed herself there, although there is no evidence of this or an approximate date for when it happened. Brightman said the girl left her family, and went to the ledge to meet her boyfriend, but he never came.

Brightman recalled an experience he had personally, during a visit he made to the ledge with his group last November; it was a paranormal encounter, he said. He had gone into a daze, and teetered at the ledge, crying, before his friends pulled him away from the edge.

Brightman said later he realized that the spirit told him to jump or leave.

Plenty of activity

Bridgewater is not the center of the triangle, Brightman said; Taunton is — specifically, the exact center is Taunton State Hospital.

“There have been many paranormal happenings at Taunton State,” Brightman said, explaining that patients there have spoke about a mysterious black being that roams the halls.

But there have been paranormal sightings all across the Bridgewater Triangle for years, Brightman said, including apparitions, simple orbs of light, and other beings. Part of the Bridgewater Triangle is an urban legend about a phantom pedestrian on Route 44 that appears in front of vehicles or in passenger seats before disappearing suddenly, he said.

Brightman said that, although it is very questionable, there have been sightings in swamp areas inside the Bridgewater Triangle of Bigfoot, so-called thunderbirds, and extremely large snakes.

Paranormal research

Brightman said he has worked with the New England Paranormal Research Group for four years, visiting graveyards, abandoned facilities and other supposedly haunted places looking for evidence.

Brightman said he has recorded two instances of an apparition during that time, including an apparent ghost of a dog and an apparent ghost hand that reached in front of his camera. Brightman said the videos can be found on the New England Paranormal Research group website, www.neparanormalresearch.com.

Presenting along with Brightman was Nathan Mayear, of New England Anomalies Research.

Mayear, of Somerset, noted that the Bridgewater Triangle is actually more of an octagon, because paranormal activity has been recorded just outside of the triangle.

He pointed out that if anyone wants to try investigating paranormal activity within the Bridgewater Triangle, they should take into consideration the area they are investigating.

“If you are going into an area, respect it,” Mayear said. “Don’t destroy it because that will prohibit other researchers from going in there. So respect the space, and yourself and your teammates.”

The website for New England Anomalies Research is www.nearparanormal.com.

Alex Houtzager, of Berkley, said he was intrigued by the Bridgewater Triangle and wanted to learn more.

“It’s an abnormality that has facts that appear to be real,” Houtzager said. “And a question is the possibility of finding truth over fiction. I would say that I do believe that there is something to it.”

Houtzager pointed out that as early as 1760 it is documented that residents within the Bridgewater Triangle observed a sphere of fire in the air that could not be explained.

“You have things that occur, and you say, ‘Well, is it natural?’” Houtzager said.

Heidi DeMello, of Dighton, attended Sunday’s event because she said she saw an unidentified flying object in 2007 over the Taunton River.

“I didn’t know about the Bridgewater Triangle at the time that I saw this,” said DeMello. “I started to investigate. ... I absolutely believe in it.”

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'Scalding cup of Costa tea' leaves woman with horrific injuries to her LAP

13:30, 1 Nov 2016 Updated 16:13, 1 Nov 2016 By Courtney Greatrex

mirror.co.uk

Melissa Postello claims she was left with horrific burns after spilling a cup of Costa tea on her lap

A woman has revealed the horrific injuries to her lap which she claims were caused by a scalding hot cup of tea from Costa .

Melissa Postello, 23, was left with third degree burns and could require skin grafts after the drink splashed over her when she left a drive-through Costa Coffee franchise.

The retail worker, from Sheffield, South Yorks., said the tea was almost too hot to handle and lost her grip causing the entire contents to land on her legs.

Melissa, who was on a second date at the time of the incident on October 14, was wearing tights and shorts when they visited the coffee chain in Meadow Hall.



SWNS

The horrific third degree burns suffered by Melissa

She said: "I was with my date and we went to the Costa drive through at about 6.30pm.

"When we took a sharp corner, I lost my grip and the scalding hot tea splashed on me.

"I remember saying 'pull over' and feeling like my legs were on fire."

Within ten minutes, she could see that the skin on her legs had lifted and began to blister.



SWNS

She was taken to hospital where she needed skin grafts

After the incident, Melissa went home and sat in a cold bath for 20 minutes.

When the searing pain had not subsided, she went straight to A&E at the Northern General Hospital.

Her deep, painful wounds were treated by medics who sent home the same day, but she may need skin grafts to repair the damage.

Melissa has hit out at Costa Coffee for having water so hot it could injure someone.

Melissa could need skin grafts to repair the damage



SWNS

She says that when she complained, staff told her that the water is never hotter than 92C, but her doctor explained that to get third degree burns, the water needed to be at least 130C.

She says: "Costa have said that they will investigate the branch, but I just want to warn people that this can even happen. I never expected anything like this to happen.

"At home, I've spilt a little bit of boiling water on myself, and it's hurt but it hasn't been anything like this."

To add insult to injury, Melissa hasn't spoken with her date since the horrific incident.
She says that he told her she'd be fine after witnessing the spill.



SWNS

Costa has said it is looking into the incident as a matter of priority

She said: "The first thing he told me was that I'd be fine.

"I was sat in his car saying it really hurts, like my legs are on fire. I was shaking because I was in shock.

"So he took me home and we haven't spoken since."

A Costa spokesperson told Mirror Online: "We were concerned to hear about this incident.

"At Costa we take the health and wellbeing of our customers very seriously, and as such we are looking into this as a matter of priority."

DailyMirror
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Teenager buried alive in bizarre therapy to cure pain from lightning strike

19:12, 24 Sep 2016 Updated 19:13, 24 Sep 2016 By Gerard Couzens

mirror.co.uk



This teenager agreed to be buried alive to cure crippling back pains after she was struck by lightning.

Ana Ballesteros, 18, was covered up to her neck for three days a week in her garden.

The bizarre home cure saw her placed in a giant hole which was filled with earth.

The girl was covered up to her neck on three days each week



Relatives believed this would “take the energy” the lightning left in her.

The teenager was struck by a bolt as she walked to college recently.

She was treated in hospital but continued to suffer back pain she claimed prevented her from walking properly.

Her gran said that they were 'taking fire out of the light'



She began quirky ‘therapy’ sessions - which involved her being buried for up to four hours a day over three days.

Ana said: “Doctors study medicine but not lightning.

“I know that getting into that hole I’m going to get better because these are ancient things.”

Her gran Blanca de la Rosa said: “What we’re doing is taking the fire out of the light, the heat out of the energy.”

Ana’s mum Milena added: “Locals told me before I took her to hospital that we’d be better off burying her instead to take the energy from the lightning away.



Local doctors are not convinced by the 'medical' therapy

“I’m praying she comes out okay.

She can’t walk properly and the burns she suffered on her feet cause her pain. I trust in God.” It is not known if the treatment, which began earlier this week, worked.

Local doctors have expressed their scepticism.

The girl was struck by lightning near her college recently



Mother Milena Garcia Pacheco said that she's 'praying' for her daughter

Walter Gomez, who works out of a clinic in the regional capital Monteria, admitted there were a lot of ancient beliefs among the community about how to cure storm victims including burial.

But he added: “There’s no scientific proof that burying a patient who has been struck by lightning has any beneficial effects for their recovery.”

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Teenager claims she is pregnant with Jesus

metro.co.uk

Toby Meyjes for Metro.co.ukThursday 3 Nov 2016 2:23 pm



Haley says she is pregnant with the baby Jesus (Picture: You Tube/Dr Phil)

Teenager claims she is pregnant with Jesus

A teenager has claimed she is pregnant with the baby Jesus despite failing a number of pregnancy tests and no one believing her.

Haley, 19, appeared on the Dr Phil Show where she explained she was certain she was carrying The Messiah and that she had felt him kicking.

She is set to undergo an ultrasound on an upcoming episode but family and members of her church are certain that she is not pregnant.

She told Dr Phil that she knows her pregnancy is real.

Teen is adamant she's about to give birth to baby Jesushttp://metro.co.uk/video/1351857

She said: ‘I was sleeping one night and my baby punched the bottom of my stomach and kicked me, and I can feel his head right here, right below my belly button.

‘I don’t care if my family disowns me. It really comes down to if you’re a true believer in Jesus or not…

‘I don’t care what the home pregnancy test or a doctor says, when I give birth to my baby, no one is going to deny him because he’s my saviour.’

Her mum, Kristi told the show that she fears her daughter is delusional and a ‘compulsive liar’.

Apparently, the 19-year-old has falsely claimed to be an American Idol contestant, a kidney donor and Eminem’s daughter.

Hayley also told Dr Phil that she was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia but her medical records show no such diagnosis.

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Ten Things To Know About Medieval Monsters

blogs.bl.uk

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

14 April 2015

In their new picture book published by the British Library, *Medieval Monsters*, medieval historian Damien Kempf and art historian Maria L. Gilbert explore the fantastic, grotesque and exuberant world of monsters in the Middle Ages through the images found in illuminated manuscripts, from dragons and demons to Yoda and hybrid creatures. The book has already attracted rave reviews: don't forget that you can buy it from the British Library online shop (£10, ISBN 9780712357906).

In this guest post, Damien and Maria describe ten things you should know about medieval monsters in a whimsical poem à la Edward Lear and Dr. Seuss.

With medieval manuscripts one does find

there lurks a particularly special kind

of creature, lurking in the margin,

religious instruction or pure diversion?

Frightening, charming, sometimes alarming;

monsters are Sin and Damnation,

Seduction, Temptation, Allure, Delectation.

We enter their world, they hold us in thrall

let's take a look, the Middle Ages call.

***

1. They may be shy



add_ms_62925_f088v_mask.png

The big-eared Panotii were a monstrous race;

located on the peripheries—an imaginary place.

Their ears were so large they could serve as blankets

or wings to fly away when overcome with shyness.

* * *

2. They may create a wonderful first impression but beware!

Bird-woman mermaid, alluring siren at sea,

sings so enchantingly there's no time to plea.



MS. LUDWIG XV 3, FOL. 78_mask.png

You're entranced, you're drawn in. That voice! Those tail swishes!

Next you're asleep and then: food for the fishes.

* * *

3. They may crave love and tenderness



unicorn.png

A horse with a long horn, most fierce and shrewd,

the all powerful unicorn easily eludes

an experienced hunter, but tame it becomes

at the touch of a virgin and completely succumbs.

* * *

4. They may be multi-headed



beast.png

An end days vision: six heads and ten horns

with multiple crowns, his head is adorned.

Mouth like a lion and feet like a bear

the Beast of the Apocalypse gives quite a scare.

* * *

5. They may be very tempting



Getty Ms. Ludwig XI 8, fol. 6v_demon adjusted.png

Living in the desert, the hermit saint Anthony

besieged by hallucinations seemingly continually.

Facing trial after trial of temptation,

this Christian ascetic retained his concentration.

* * *

6. They may bite off more than they can chew

Margaret of Antioch, thrown into prison

by the prefect Olibrius for being a Christian.

The devil as a dragon visited her there,



MS. 37, FOL. 49V_mask.png

swallowed her whole but having said a prayer

she burst out unharmed, a dragon slayer.

* * *

7. They may take your soul on your deathbed if you behave badly



Ms. 57, fol. 194_mask.png

At death, both an angel and devil are waiting.

Will your soul go to hell or is it worth saving?

It depends on the deeds you performed in life.

whether you repented or caused bitter strife.

* * *

8. They may be quite irksome



john.png

On Patmos, John (the Evangelist probably)

wrote revelations, an apocalyptic prophecy.

A mischievous demon tried to spoil the plot

by sneakily stealing John's ink pot.

* * *

9. They may be flashy



michael-dragons.png

Warrior angel Michael, celestial army head

smote the devil down but didn't strike him dead.

A spectacular battle, some would say,

as theatrical & vibrant as lucha libre.

* * *

10. They may look like Hollywood movie stars

Sendak, Burton, Lucas, and Seuss



yoda.png

Their films: medieval monster reuse!

Handsome, playful, quirky, and whimsical

Nothing, it seems, is ever new in principle.

Damien Kempf and Maria L. Gilbert

FEATURED: Panotti (British Library Add MS 62925, f. 88v, detail); Siren (Ms. Ludwig XV 3, f. 78, detail, J. Paul Getty Museum); Unicorn (BL Stowe 17, f. 90v, detail); Beast of the Apocalypse (BL Add. 54180, f. 14v, detail); Anthony's demon (Ms. Ludwig XI 8, f. 6v, detail, Getty Museum); Margaret's dragon (Ms. 37, f. 49v, detail, Getty Museum); Soul takers (Ms. 57, f. 194, detail, Getty Museum); John's demon (Ms. Ludwig IX 6, f.13, detail, Getty Museum); Michael and the Devil (BL Add 18851, f. 464, detail); Figure in monk's robes ('Yoda') (Royal 10 E IV, f. 30, detail).

This is a charmingoece, but you may want to alter 'alludes' to 'eludes' in verse 3

Posted by: Macdonald | 14 April 2015 at 08:20 PM

Excellent! Congrats.

Posted by: liz | 14 April 2015 at 08:56 PM

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Stunned babysitter spots something haunting on child's monitor

09:26, 13 Oct 2016 Updated 13:21, 13 Oct 2016 By Jon Dean

mirror.co.uk

Babysitting can be a daunting experience at the best of times, but when the child indulges in a spot of somnambulant gymnastics it's truly terrfying.

That's the worrying situation which confronted Mikaela Long while looking after her niece.

Ms Long, a social media personality in California, was doing her best to be a good auntie when she spotted something very strange on the baby monitor.

The child was fast asleep - while standing on her HEAD - with her legs arching over the bars of the cot.

Ms Long Tweeted about her niece's hair-raising nocturnal exploits to her 22,000 Twitter followers.



Twitter



Twitter

Mikaela Long's niece performed some unusual nighttime aerobics
Ms Long Tweeted to her 22,000 followers
The Californian's post quickly went viral

She posted: "This is my first time babysitting and idk where I went wrong but my niece is currently asleep on her head.

"Do I call the parents or the exorcist?"

The picture predictably went viral - being shared 55,000 times liked more than 120,000 people.

Ms Long spotted the little girl upside down on the baby monitor
The Tweeter compared the image to horror film Paranormal Activity

Many of those shocked by the picture compared the late night hand stand to something from horror film Paranormal Activity.

Ms Long responded with a meme she put together featuring her niece alongside scenes from the terrifying 2009 ghost flick.

The child's mother told Buzzfeed the girl has "been quite acrobatic lately', and that she was "settling down and getting comfortable".

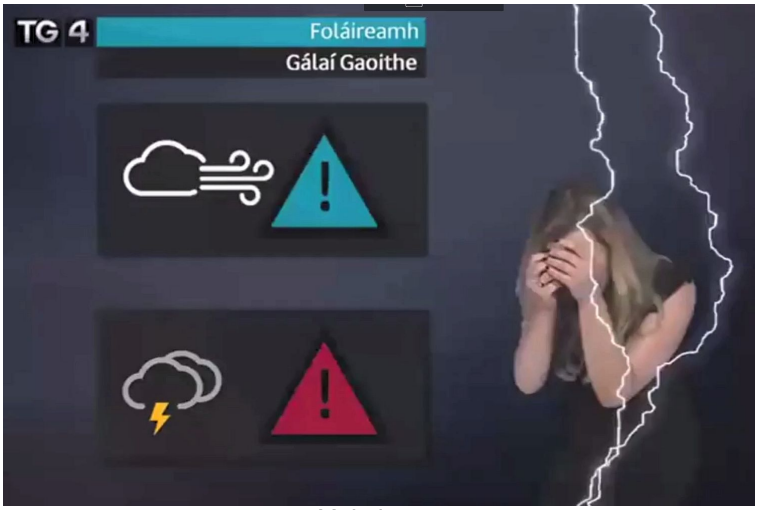
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TG4 weather presenter hit by ‘bolt of lightning’ for spooky Halloween prank

04:04, 1 Nov 2016

thesun.ie



Main Image

TG4's Caitlín Nic Aoidh pranked viewers

THIS is the moment an Irish weather presenter was “struck by lightning” on the telly.

TG4’s Caitlín Nic Aoidh shocked viewers with an electric prank on Halloween night.

Viewers took to social media after the weather woman was hit by a bolt of lightning and then vanished from the screen.

One said: “What just happened on @TG4TV? Did she just get electrocuted or was that a Halloween prank? #TG4.”

While another added: “Still not as scary as the usual weather in Galway #TG4.”

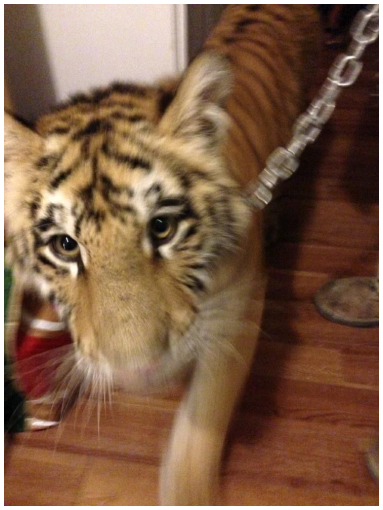
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Not known

That's no house cat: Nevada police find 3 tigers in backyard

yahoo.com

AP Associated PressNovember 15, 2016



This undated photo provided by the Nye County Sheriff's Office shows one of three tigers sheriff's deputies found after Trisha Meyer was arrested in Pahrump, Nev. Authorities say Meyer, who asked if it was legal to keep tigers at home in a rural Nevada town was arrested after sheriff's deputies found the three tigers in her backyard. (Nye County Sheriff's Office via AP)

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Authorities say a woman who asked them if it was legal to keep tigers at home in rural Nevada was arrested after police found three of the animals in her backyard.

The Nye County sheriff's office says 34-year-old Trisha Meyer had called for information on a permit to have tigers.

Days later, a resident reported the tigers, and deputies went to the home. They also had learned she was wanted in Texas on a felony burglary and theft warrant.

Sgt. David Boruchowitz (buh-ROOK'-uh-witz) says deputies found the big cats in the backyard surrounded by a 4-foot fence, and eight monkeys in the home.

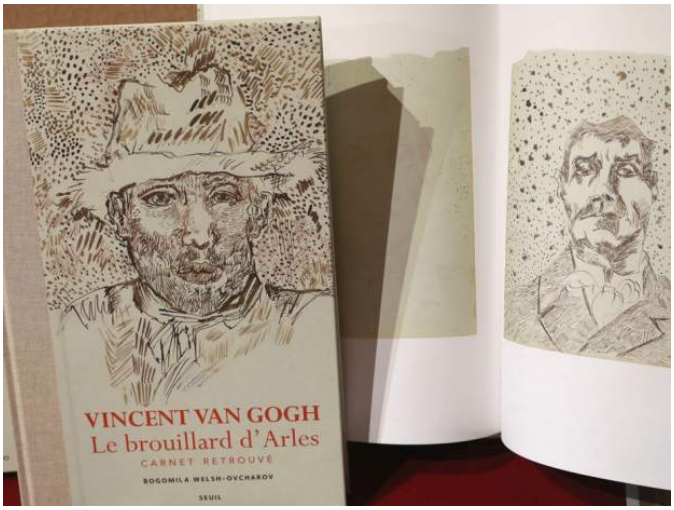
A Nevada court official said Tuesday that Meyer wasn't held on local charges. She agreed not to fight extradition to Houston at a court appearance Nov. 9.

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The 'unbelievable' discovery of Vincent van Gogh's lost sketchbook turns out to be literally unbelievable

| November 15, 2016 12:54 PM ET

nationalpost.com



What was first described as “one of the biggest art world discoveries in years” is, it turns out, not. A sketchbook, believed to have been Vincent van Gogh’s does not belong to the artist at all.

The sketchbook, which contained 65 previously unknown ink drawings, was initially thought to have belonged to van Gogh, was recently discovered in Arles, France. The book’s work was seemingly identified in part by University of Toronto professor Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov, who is a noted van Gogh expert.

“When I opened it up, the first thing I said was, ‘No, unbelievable!’” Welsh-Ovcharov said to CBC News. “The first drawing that I took out and held in my hands, it was a moment of total mystical experience: ‘Oh my goodness, this is impossible!’”

At a Paris press conference on Tuesday, French publishers Le Seuil announced the discovery, adding that a book reproducing the drawings, edited by Welsh-Ovcharov and titled Vincent van Gogh: The Lost Arles Sketchbook, would be published simultaneously on Tuesday in France, the U.S., Japan, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands.

Although Le Seuil insisted that the sketches’ “authenticity is well established,” the van Gogh Museum has since issued a statement saying the sketchbook does not, in fact, belong to the iconic artist.

“At an earlier stage (in 2008 and 2012), our experts gave their opinion on its authenticity at the request of various owners of drawings from the album,” it read. “On the basis of high-quality photographs sent to them of 56 drawings – out of 65 in total – they were of the opinion that these could not be attributed to Vincent van Gogh. After examining a number of the original drawings in 2013, our experts did not change their minds.”

Experts dismissed the sketchbook drawings as mere “imitations” of van Gogh’s work, after examining his style, technique and iconography. They found the new work to contain “distinctive topographical errors” and that “its maker based it on discoloured drawings” by van Gogh.

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The 1016 Danish Conquest that led to the battle of Hastings

Friday 14th October 2016

historyextra.com

BBC History Magazine logo

The tumultuous events of 1066 are among the best known in history. But, argues author Justin Hill, 1066 would never have happened without the Danish Conquest of 1016. Here, writing for *History Extra*, Hill investigates…



Following the battle of Maldon in AD 991, Æthelred's court paid the Vikings to leave in the form of Danegeld. (Chronicle/Alamy Stock Photo)

Everyone's heard of 1066: Harold of England (allegedly) got an arrow in the eye and William the Conqueror became king of England. England was dragged out of the northern, Germanic world, into the orbit of France and a different culture of arts and architecture and social organisation. It was the last time, so folklore goes, that England was invaded. But what most people *haven't* heard about is the *other* time England was conquered and had a foreign king sit on the throne. It is that conquest, the Danish Conquest of 1016, that brought about the end of Anglo-Saxon England and, more importantly, put into motion the events of 1066.

Setting the scene

Let us go back to the world that brought about the Danish Conquest – the end of the reign of that other well-remembered figure, Æthelred the Unready. Æthelred's name was the compound of 'Æthel' and 'raed', which meant 'noble-counsel'. His nickname was 'Un-read', meaning 'bad council' and was a polite way of describing how inept he was.

Æthelred was the son of Edgar the Peaceable and his second wife, a *Game of Thrones*' Cersei Lannister of the Anglo-Saxon period: beautiful, ruthless and prepared to risk all for her child. Ælfthryth was the result of a marriage between the ealdorman of Devon and her mother, a member of the Wessex royal family. The Wessex kings had long built up both patronage and familial links throughout their old heartland of Wessex through long friendships and marriages like this.

A story, written by William of Malmesbury, said that when King Edgar was looking for a wife he sent someone from his court, a man named Æthelwald, to see if Ælfthryth was as beautiful as she was rumoured to be. But Æthelwald was so struck by the beauty of this young girl that he lied to the king and ended up marrying her himself. But rumours could not be silenced, and when King Edgar decided to see the girl for himself, Æthelwald, in panic, insisted that his wife try to appear as unattractive as possible. But Ælfthryth did the opposite and turned herself out in all her finery. King Edgar was smitten; Æthelwald was killed hunting, and with his death Ælfthryth's route to the queen was open. Æthelred was the product of that union.

Silver penny of Æthelred the Unready. (Photo by Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

Edgar died in 975 leaving two sons: Edward (born from a previous marriage) and the minor Æthelred. Edward was clearly the best choice and ruled for nearly three years, until a fateful day at Corfe Castle when, while visiting his young brother, he was dragged from his horse and murdered by retainers of the queen. Æthelred would reign for the next 38 years, and so started one of the longest – and most disastrous – reigns of medieval England.

The poem 'The Battle of Maldon' talks of the battle in 991, when Ealdorman Bryhtnoth, a leading figure in the Æthelred court, was killed in battle against a Viking army. The poem speaks eloquently of the military ethos that Bryhtnoth's retainer Brythwold felt, declaring that he would die at his lord's side rather than run from the battle. But many other men, who would be faced with the same choice, would find their resolution less ironclad.

Money matters

Following the battle of Maldon in AD 991 [in which Earl Byrhtnoth and his thegns led the English against a Viking invasion, ending in an Anglo-Saxon defeat], Æthelred's court turned to a policy that had worked before, paying the Vikings to leave in the form of Danegeld, which was paid in silver coin and bullion. That first Danegeld was 10,000 pounds of silver. By 1002 the sum was 24,000 pounds, but while Viking sea-kinds swore oaths not to return to England, many of their followers did not feel similarly bound, and instead clustered around the country like wolves around a wounded beast.

The attacks on England came almost yearly, with Viking armies living parasitically in England for most of the next 10 years, and the sums of silver paid to them began to spiral out of control. By 1009, 48,000 pounds of silver was paid to Thorkell the Tall to leave England.

Normandy had been a haven for the Viking fleets, which would take their slaves and silver across the Channel to sell it off. In an effort to close off the seaports, Æthelred married Emma, daughter of Richard I, Duke of Normandy, as his second wife. It was the son of this union, Edward the Confessor, who would end up as king of England in 1042.



Statue to Byrhtnoth, leader at the battle of Maldon in AD 991. (Les polders/Alamy Stock Photo)

The thousands of pounds of silver paid to the Vikings were also having a profound effect on the places where the Vikings were coming from; giving young Viking aspirants so much wealth that they could return home and, through gift-giving and patronage, make themselves kings. Both Olaf Tryggvason and Saint Olaf were young sea kings who benefited from the events of this period.

But the wealth and power that such amounts of silver gave chieftains threatened established kings. At the same time the kings of Denmark were building an aggressive, powerful and Christian new state, and the ambitious Swein Forkbeard, who like Philip II of Macedon had fashioned his fledgling country into an aggressive and powerful military power, seems to have decided that if others could shear the fat English sheep, then he could do one better, and take over the whole flock. So, in 1013 Swein Forkbeard sailed into the Humber, the old heart of the Danelaw, and declared himself king. Æthelred was unable to respond, and the country, it seemed, was finished with the House of Wessex.

Archbishop Wulfstan's 11th-century work 'Sermon of the Wolf' lists the social ills that he saw throughout Anglo-Saxon England: theft, slavery, perjury, fornication, murder, worshipping false gods and other misdeeds. The fabric of English society had been stretched to the point of tearing and now the country seemed barely able to resist.

While the fighting had taken a toll on the traditional aristocracy, continual taxes had a much more profound affect. Anglo-Saxon taxes were levied on manorial estates. If you were unable to pay the taxes for your land then your land was forfeit: if someone else paid the tax for you then the land became theirs. The repeated imposition of these taxes and new ones (such as the 1008 taxes used to build a fleet of ships), combined with Viking raiding and pillaging across large swathes of the country, saw the heartlands of Wessex power reduced to penury. The social breakdown of this period cannot be exaggerated. It went on for so long that faith in the House of Wessex began to erode. Nothing, it seemed, would solve the problem.

Changing tides

But chance gave Æthelred a second shot. On the day after Candlemas, 3 February 1014, Swein Forkbeard died and his second son, Cnut, returned to Denmark rather than fight. Æthelred had fled to the Duchy of Normandy, where his wife, Emma, was from, and he was brought back to England "saying that he would be their faithful lord – would better each of those things that they disliked – and that each of the things should be forgiven which had been either done or said against him; provided they all unanimously, without treachery, turned to him".

But just as Philip II of Macedon had been followed by a keener and more ambitious son, so it was with Swein, whose son, Cnut, returned two years later determined to finish the war his father had started. The Wessex heartlands gave up on Æthelred in 1015. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle notes, laconically, "The West-Saxons also submitted, and gave hostages, and horsed the army".

Æthelred died on St George's Day 1016, too late, it seemed, to do anything but allow Cnut to take all of England. But Æthelred's eldest living son, Edmund Ironside, had not got the memo, and set about raising forces to throw the Danes out. He fought six battles that summer and seemed set to stage a great revival, until he was betrayed in battle by Eadric, the Ealdorman of Mercia. Edmund and Cnut agreed to split the country into two, but Edmund died shortly after, either from wounds from battle or assassination. It is Edmund Ironside who is really the last Anglo-Saxon king because what followed after was an Anglo-Danish state in which Earl Godwin, father of Harold Godwinson, rose to power.

Stained glass image of King Cnut from Canterbury Cathedral. (Photo by CM Dixon/Print



Collector/Getty Images)

Godwin was probably the son of a minor but successful thane in Sussex named Wulfnoth Cild. Sussex was outside the traditional Wessex heartland, and his rise to power seems to have put out of joint the noses of older and more prestigious houses – scandalous stories arose of his humble background.

Godwin was a skilled politician with a keen nose for the direction of the wind. You can trace this in the names of his children: his first sons were all named after Danish kings – Swein, Harold, Tostig, Gyrth; but after Cnut's death he switched to Anglo-Saxon names, Leofwine and Wulfnoth. But despite the names the facts remained: Godwin had married a member of the Danish royal circle and his children were half Danish. Like their cousin, Beorn Estridson, they were part of an international aristocracy that looked across the North Sea and saw it as part of their own world.

Fractures

The fracture of 1016 ran through the next 50 years of English history. When Edward the Confessor was king he seemed an unhappy prisoner of his earls, unable to impose his royal will without their support. When the showdown came between him and Earl Godwin, the only remaining heir of the House of Wessex had to rely not on his family's heartland, but on the earls of Mercia and Northumbria. The deep connections between king and country that allowed Æthelred to stagger on for so long had gone. The political climate of England had changed. Power was now vested more in the earls than the throne.

So while the struggles with the Danes brought Queen Emma to the court and a Norman bloodline that would be used as a screen of legitimacy by William the Conqueror, it was really 1016 that set the stage for 1066. Wessex, which had been old when Alfred took the throne, had over the centuries shown itself to be the most resilient of fighters. It had an uncanny ability to be knocked down and to stand back up again, and with Edmund Ironside's brilliant campaign of 1016 it showed a last, final, brilliant display of resilience.

But with Edmund's death, pugnacious Wessex was gone. What rose from the ashes was an Anglo-Danish state with new men in charge who did not have long lines of lineage and links with the Wessex royal family. Despite the wealth and the power, there was a fragility to the England of 1066, which was apparent in the months after Hastings, when England was riven by conflict.

Harold Godwinson might have been a member of the Danish royal family, but he was not of royal English blood, and even though he left grown sons, it seems that they could not command the same bloody-minded resolve from the men of England that Edmund Ironside had. Rather than dubbing him the last Anglo-Saxon King, Harold Godwinson should be thought of as the last *Anglo-Danish* king.

Justin Hill is the author of *Viking Fire* (Little, Brown 2016), which tells the true story of Harald Hardrada, the last Viking. Hill is also the author of *Shieldwall* (2011) about the Danish Conquest in 1016, a *Sunday Times* Book of the Year.

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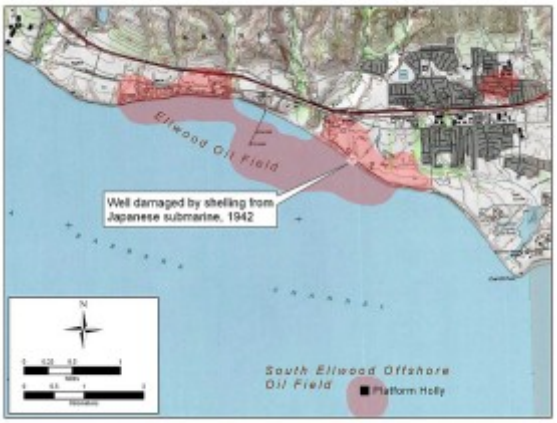
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The Bombardment of Ellwood

ODDLY HISTORICAL



A detailed map of the Ellwood Oil Fields, which were shelled by a Japanese sub.

One of the main reasons for America's rise from power to superpower in the wake of World War II was the fact that, while Europe and broad swaths of the world were in shambles from six years of ferocious fighting, the American homeland remained largely untouched. This, however, does not mean that the United States never suffered attacks. The history of attacks on the American homefront is both fascinating and little known, mostly due to war time censorship meant to maintain morale. Several such attacks occurred in the wake of Pearl Harbor, when German U-boats attacked American shipping off the East Coast.

On West Coast, the fear of attack by Japanese forces was palpable, understandably so since the logical next step after Pearl Harbor was an attack on California. If the Japanese launched an invasion of the West Coast, many believed that the onslaught could not be stopped until their forces thrust deep into the heart of America. In reality, the Japanese lacked the capability for such an assault, and instead settled for pinprick attacks, some using the rather ingenious methods. The first such attack occurred on February 23, 1942, when a Japanese sub shelled an oil refinery near Santa Barbara, eventually provoking one of the strangest events in American history.

The Shelling of Ellwood

The Ellwood oil fields lay 12 miles north of Santa Barbara, California. At 7:10pm the night of February 23, the Imperial Japanese Navy submarine I-17 surfaced off the coast. It was sighted a mile off shore by Mrs. George Heaney, who caught a glimpse of the sub through binoculars and called the police. Five minutes later, the sub opened fire with its deck gun. The reports about the number of shells fired that night vary wildly, but the consensus is about 16. Most of the shots fell short, dropping into the ocean. One shell overshot the refinery, exploding at a nearby ranch. Another landed at a separate ranch near the refinery, digging a five foot crater but failing to explode. Three shells struck the Bankline Co. oil refinery, damaging a derrick and a pump house. Within twenty minutes of the first shot, the sub slipped beneath the waves.

A bit of a bizarre story behind the motivations of the commander of I-17 has attached itself to the event. It goes that Kozo Nishino, the commander of the I-17, was a commander of a Japanese oil tanker in the 1930s. The tanker visited Ellwood oil field to take on crude. While walking up the beach to a ceremony welcoming Nishino and his crew, he tripped and fell on a prickly-pear cactus. The sight of the dignified commander dressed in his best plucking cactus spines from his rump made the American oil men break into riotous laughter. A humiliated Nishino vowed to get revenge.

The reality is far more mundane. Nishino was ordered to execute panic inducing attacks on West Coast population centers. San Francisco and San Diego were too well defended, so the oil fields

were the next best choice.

Rumor, fear, and the Battle of Los Angeles

The impact of the attack on Ellwood far exceeded its scale. The shelling only partially damaged some buildings, and while one service man was injured trying to defuse a dud, no one was killed. The attack struck a nerve nevertheless. People reported having seen “signal lights” on land that night, supposedly directing the attack. The enemy seemed to be active all around, and the fear that another, larger attack might come was very real.

Rumor and fear had two effects in the wake of the shelling at Ellwood. One such effect was the event now known as the Battle of Los Angeles, when American anti-aircraft crews in Los Angeles opened fire on a mysterious object (or objects) in the skies above the city. The so-called battle has become known as among the largest UFO events in American history, and many still speculate as to what the object was that caused the ruckus. More likely than not, the scare was caused by a combination of an errant weather balloon and fears of Japanese attack, stoked by Ellwood. So, it had more to do with mass panic than alien intervention.

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This entry was posted in Weapons and Warfare and tagged Bombardment of Ellwood, WWII on June 26, 2015 by Andrew Kincaid.

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The coffin club: elderly New Zealanders building their own caskets

Eleanor Ainge Roy in Dunedin
Thursday 22 September 2016 Last modified on Thursday 22 September 2016

theguardian.com

Dozens of groups have sprung up across the country, providing retirees with new friends and, ultimately, cheaper funerals



Quilting, lawn bowls and bridge it is not. Elderly people in New Zealand are enthusiastically embracing a new pastime: coffin construction.

Scores of retirees across the country have formed clubs so they can get together and build their own coffins. They say the activity is cost-saving and helps to combat loneliness.

The original coffin club was founded in Rotorua in 2010 by former palliative care nurse Katie Williams, 77. Since then the model has spread around the country, and there are now a dozen coffin clubs operating in both the North and South Island.

“Because of my work and my age I had become a perpetual mourner,” says Williams.



“I had seen lots of people dying and their funerals were nothing to do with the vibrancy and life of those people. You would not know what they were really like. That they had lived and laughed and loved. I had a deep-seated feeling that people’s journey’s deserved a more personal farewell.”

Williams initially launched the Kiwi Coffin Club in her garage, with no tools, no volunteers and no idea how to construct a coffin. But after a host of handy local men came on-board – she calls them “the darlings” – the club took off, and soon moved to a larger facility to cater to its swelling numbers.



“There is a lot of loneliness among the elderly, but at the coffin club people feel useful, and it is very social. We have morning tea and lunch, and music blaring, and cuddles.”

As well as members building their own coffins (home-made coffins cost just NZ$250) the group also construct baby coffins for the local hospital, which they donate for free.

Jeanette Higgins, also 77, lost her daughter and husband in the last two years. Death was on her mind. Last year she attended the club but got “spooked” at the last minute, and didn’t return again until a few months ago.

“I think I was a bit overwhelmed initially, I couldn’t decide how to decorate it,” says Higgins, who eventually settled on a silver and black pattern and blue lid.



“But when you start getting on with it, and sanding and painting, you don’t really think about it [death]. I am of the opinion that it is very healthy to face up to the inevitable. It is an emotional experience and it helps you resolve... something. I feel quite prepared now, it is stored in a cupboard at home, waiting for me.”

Williams says the club is particularly appealing to Maori people, who often have large families and find the cost of funerals “crippling”, and families who come from “stiff-upper lip backgrounds”, who may have previously found it difficult to confront the impending death of a loved one.

It is stored in a cupboard at home, waiting for me.

“Our motto is; it’s a box until there is someone in it. And while it’s just a box, it brings us together.”

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The election was so bad Facebook thinks everyone is dead

venturebeat.com

Harrison Weber November 11, 2016 12:40 PM

A bug appears to have caused Facebook.com to trigger memorial alerts on at least some users' timelines.

Facebook, I know the election was bad, but we're not all dead yet.

The alert reads "Remembering [name]. We hope people who love [name] will find comfort in the things others share to remember and celebrate his life. Learn more about memorialized accounts and the legacy contact setting on Facebook."

We're reached out to Facebook for more details. And if you see a memorial notice on Facebook, proceed with caution.

Later, Facebook offered the following statement:

> For a brief period today, a message meant for memorialized profiles was mistakenly posted to other accounts. This was a terrible error that we have now fixed. We are very sorry that this happened and we worked as quickly as possible to fix it.

Updated 2:24 p.m. PT with Facebook's statement.

Ken YeungNovember 12, 2016 06:00 AM

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The Fish Eater of Stromovka - Prague's Wanna Be Vampire? - My Haunted Life Too

myhauntedlifetoo.com

26 September 2016 | Your Stories

A large park called Stromovka in Prague boasts a Fish Eater, a sort of vampire that feasts on the blood of rotting fish but, should you be passing through the park on a moonlit night, may just be tempted to try a drop of human blood too.

The Fish Eater was once an aide to a certain General Windischgratz, who held various posts in the Austrian army, but notably was head of the army in Prague. He was apparently a strange man who hailed from an aristocratic family and was in someway related to Count Dracula. He would bathe in the fishponds of the park on moonlit nights imagining himself as the head officer of the fish in the pond who he saw as his soldiers. Unfortunately, he met a bloody end at the hands of a man named Vondra who beat him to death with a stick. Vondra threw his battered body into one of the ponds where it lay undiscovered and rotting for a long time. Of course, he could have become a regular vampire, but his long sojourn in the mud and water of the fishponds was said to have weakened him to the point where he instead became the Fish Eater of Stromovka.

Taken from The Czech Republic – The Most Haunted Country in the World?

My Haunted Life Too
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The Hexham Heads and the Werewolf

spookyisles.com

MJ Steel Collins
22nd July 2013



Hexham Heads

M J STEEL COLLINS tells the frightening tale of ancient curses and modern day werewolves in North East England

In 1971, a family from the town of Hexham, England, were driven from their home following the strange occurrences that plagued their house following the discovery of two small stone heads in their garden.

Bizarre phenomena included poltergeist activity and the proclivity for the heads to move around by themselves. The heads themselves were about six centimetres in size: one was called “the boy” due its masculine, skull like appearance and the other, “the girl” because it had long hair and female features carved into it. The final straw came when one of the family’s children and a neighbour witnessed a terrifying creature, “half-sheep, half-human” and the front door opening by itself.

Dr Anne Ross, an expert on stone heads, came into possession of the Hexham Heads after they were sent away for analysis. In recounting the strange circumstances, Dr Ross remembered a strange coldness emanating from the heads and taking an instant dislike to them. She initially concluded they were Celtic.

That night, Dr Ross woke around 2 or 3 AM, noticing the intense chill of the bedroom and the feeling that ‘something’ was there. She was alarmed to see a six feet tall half-man, half-wolf figure lurking by the door. The being left the room, followed by Dr Ross, descended the stairs and leapt over the banister, before heading to the back of the house. Investigations found nothing there.

Four days later, Dr Ross’ 15 year old daughter was terrified by the sight of the werewolf hiding on the stairs when she came home from school. The wolf again jumped over the banister and disappeared into the music room. Dr Ross’ daughter followed, but couldn’t see the wolf in the room. After this, the entire family, including the cat, saw or heard the werewolf, always slinking down the stairs and jumping over the banister. Once, Dr Ross’ husband, who was ill in bed, had his dinner taken up to him by his daughters, which was slightly hindered by the werewolf standing on the stairs.

The family associated the strangeness with the Hexham Heads and were desperate to get rid of them. Dr Ross worked on them as a matter of priority, halting her other work. Eventually the heads were passed on to other experts. One refused to take them on the spot, having had previous bad luck when he had stone heads stored in his car boot. The Hexham Heads were then investigated by a chemist, who discovered that they had a high level of quartz.

In the midst of several investigations, the heads eventually disappeared. No one knows where they wound up – or whatever happened to the werewolf. However, it later emerged that a previous owner

of the house in Hexham, where the heads were originally found, came forward and said that he had made the heads as toys for his children.

Whatever the case, it is still an interesting situation. It is still being looked into today by Paul Screeton, one of the first to investigate it during the 1970s.

Spooky Isles' Scotland Correspondent MJ STEEL COLLINS is a Glasgow based writer. She is a reviewer for the Fortean Times and also writes for Haunted Digital Magazine and CSRPI in the US.

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The Wolf of Allendale / The Hexham Wolf



Mysterious Britain Merchandise

It was 1972, and at the Robson family home in Hexham, only ten minutes walk away from where the legendary Wolf of Allendale had roamed the woods, the two young Robson brothers dug up two small, carved stone heads whilst they were tending the garden.

Several nights after the discovery of the stone heads, neighbour Ellen Dodd and her daughter were sitting up late one evening when both of them witnessed a *"half-man, half beast"* entering the bedroom. The pair screamed in terror but, the creature seemed indifferent to them and simply left the room, heard to be *"padding down the stairs as if on its hind legs"* . Later on, the front door was found open. It has been thought that the creature had been in search of something, and had left the house to continue searching elsewhere.1

Interest in the local legend of The Wolf of Allendale was rekindled by this event and the stone heads became associated with the possible re-appearance of the wolf.

The two stone heads, each about the size of an orange, were thought to be Celtic in origin and collector Dr Anne Ross took possession of the heads, as she had several other stone heads in her collection and wished to compare them to the Hexham pair. A few nights after taking possession of the heads, Dr Ross awoke at 2am one morning, feeling cold and frightened. Looking up, she saw a strange creature standing in her bedroom doorway:



"It was about six feet high, slightly stooping, and it was black, against the white door, and it was half animal and half man. The upper part, I would have said, was a wolf, and the lower part was human and, I would have again said, that it was covered with a kind of black, very dark fur. It went out and I just saw it clearly, and then it disappeared, and something made me run after it, a thing I wouldn't normally have done, but I felt compelled to run after it. I got out of bed and I ran, and I could hear it going down the stairs, then it disappeared towards the back of the house."

Living and working in Southampton, Dr Ross knew nothing of The Wolf of Allendale legend and the association of The Hexham Heads with the possible return of the wolf and, she attributed the experience to a nightmare. Dr Ross came home with her archaeologist husband Richard Feacham one day, only to find their teenage daughter Berenice in a distressed state. Berenice explained that she had used her key to unlock the front door and entered the house that afternoon to witness a large, black shape rushing down the stairs; halfway downstairs the creature vaulted the bannister, landing with a soft, heavy thud like a large animal with padded feet.

Believing the presence of the stone heads to be responsible for these events, Dr Ross passed on her whole collection of stone heads, along with the Hexham pair to other collectors. The Hexham Heads found their way to the British Museum for public display, though were soon removed from display and mothballed, amid reports of unsettling events associated with the heads.

There have been claims that The Hexham Heads were not Celtic in origin and had simply been carved as toys by the previous occupants of the Robson family home only twenty years previously, and had subsequently become lost in the garden. It has also been said that the heads were

examined by the Universities of Newcastle and Southampton for dating. For now, the current whereabouts of The Hexham Heads remains unknown. Despite this, the legend of The Hexham Heads and its association with The Wolf of Allendale has become a cornerstone of the local folklore of the area.

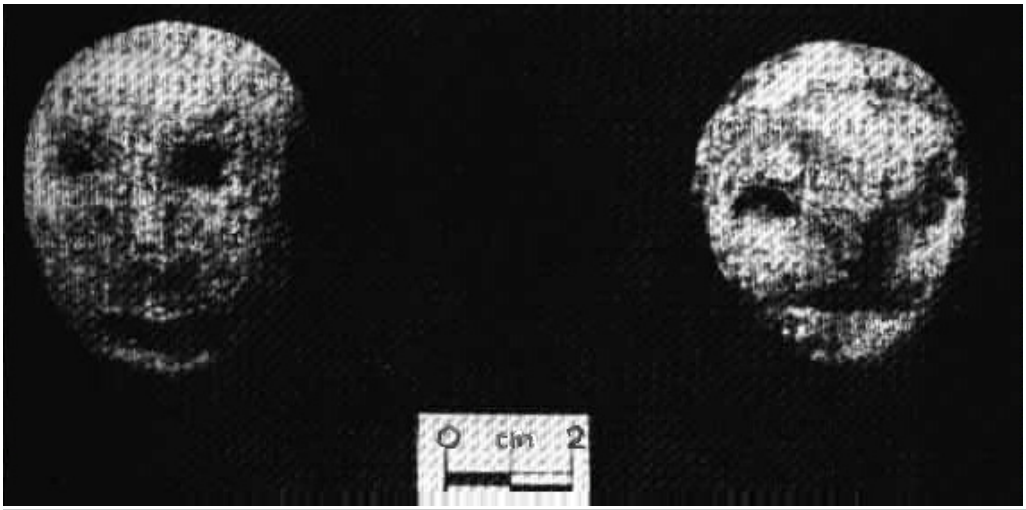
Sources

1*Nationwide*, TV programme, 1976
Mystery Animals of Britain and Ireland - Graham J. McEwan, 1986



***"Wolf at Large in Allendale"* was the headline of *The Hexham Courant* on 10th December 1904.** *The Courant* reported that in the last three weeks, farmers around the village of Allendale were stabling their animals at night as loss of livestock had become a serious concern.

Tue, 13/01/2009 - 01:18
#1
SJMcKenzie
Joined: 2 Nov 2008
Rather non-descript aren't



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The image of grief

conviction19c

convictionblog.com

https://convictionblog.com/2016/10/19/the-image-of-grief-2/

October 19, 2016

Great Yarmouth Quarter Sessions, the Tolhouse, 23 June 1841

Head bowed, William John Jarvis grips the wooden stand to steady himself. His legs almost give way as the Recorder reads out the charges for embezzling letters from the Postmaster General.

The postman has dreaded the trial since his arrest in March.[1] Yet he has longed for it too, for the waiting to be over, and to know of his punishment. Awake at night, sick in the stomach, his mind has raced, imagining the content of the letters he left undelivered and the harm he inflicted on their senders and recipients. Shame overwhelms the prisoner as the jury is asked to consider his numerous victims. *A tradesman ruined by a bill unpaid… A child unaware of a mother's request to visit… A husband prevented from rushing home to see his dying wife*.[2] He fumbles for his handkerchief and dabs his eyes.

The letter carrier has offered no reason why he hid nearly four hundred letters and newspapers in his sitting-room cupboard and the small writing desk in his bedroom. From the moment of arrest, he has acknowledged his guilt—the only offence in his twenty-seven years.[3] He'd known it before, sitting immobilised in his room, staring at the incriminating envelopes and parcels. The testimony of the witnesses, who speak on his behalf, only amplifies his degradation. *An excellent character*, reliable and trusted, fondly named *the Flying Postman*. He wipes another tear.[4]

The jurymen recommend mercy though they find the prisoner guilty. Sentencing William Jarvis to seven years transportation, the Recorder announces the magistrates will petition the authorities for mitigation. But the prisoner hears only the pronouncement of guilt.

From the gallery, Sarah Martin has watched each prisoner intently as they stand in the dock. She has never witnessed a defendant so racked by remorse as Jarvis.

He stood the image of grief, each hand resting on part of the box, except when using his pocket-handkerchief and head quite bowed down.

Compared with the apparent calm of Charlotte Yaxley, arraigned for drowning her step-daughter, in his deep sorrow *it seemed as if Jarvis were the murderer*.

The agony of grief the prisoner has shown, since the day he was committed, *has never worn off*, writes the prison teacher. *He never allowed a single word in his own extenuation. Not a moment has his countenance lost the deep expression of sadness*.[5]

***

Great Yarmouth Gaol, 24 June 1841

Sarah Martin is permitted to see William Jarvis alone. Given his contrition, it is her *duty to speak of comfort*. A petition for mercy is being raised. Perhaps he will be allowed to serve his sentence at the General Penitentiary at Milbank rather than be sent to the hulks to await transportation.

The prisoner is afraid to hope. *My trial was conducted with justice in its mildest form and both the Recorder and Jury were kind*. *I will bear all patiently and never allow myself to utter a single complaint*.

Did you think of destroying those letters? the teacher asks, the question everyone pondered during his trial.

Such a thought never entered my mind, Jarvis replies. Once he had missed the delivery time, he was too afraid to acknowledge his error.

The prisoner thanks Miss Martin for the books she places in his hands and turns their pages gratefully.

I hope I may be able to keep a Bible with me, wherever I am sent.[6]

***

1 July 1841

Tomorrow the prisoners sentenced to transportation will be dispatched for the hulks. Sarah Martin visits each in turn.

She is anxious less William Jarvis *might mistake sorrow for punishment, for repentance before God*.

Clasping the Testament to his chest, he reassures the teacher, thanking her for bringing him its truth.

My mind is more composed now. Much as I suffer, I feel a support under it. It was not so when I first came. The first thought I then had, was, in some way or other, to take away my own life and yet escape damnation.

I have sent a letter, the prisoner explains, *to the young men I used to meet of an evening, to be worried by my example. Now my character is gone, I would rather leave the country and settle when free—wherever it might be—were it not for my mother and sister. I fear my departure might hasten my mother's death*. They are all alone since his father died four years ago.[7] What will become of them?

Without irony, Sarah Martin ends her last observation of William Jarvis by noting, *I am told he was too fond of skating and lost much time in winter by that*.[8]

***



Penny Black postage stamp credit Wikipedia

William Jarvis had been a shoemaker but took up the position of postman shortly after the Royal Mail introduced the *penny black* postage stamp in 1840. The new uniform charge for delivery anywhere in the UK, and paid by the recipient rather than the recipient, made letter writing affordable to all but the very poor and dramatically increased written correspondence, necessitating the hasty recruitment of carriers. In 1849, 347 million letters were posted, in comparison with 79 million in 1839.[9]

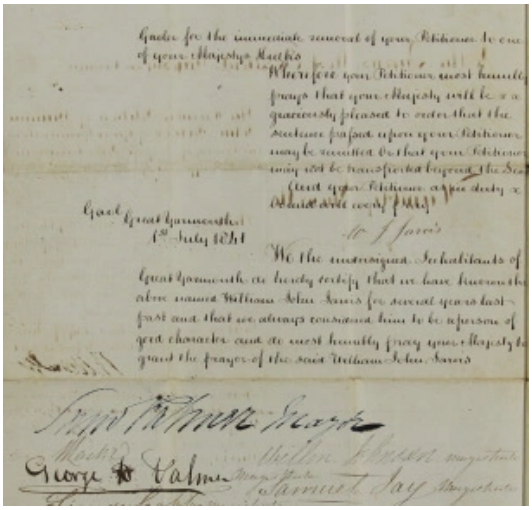
The success of this revolution in communication depended on public trust in the Royal Mail and its employees. Before letterboxes were inserted in front doors in 1849, correspondence was delivered by the postman directly into the hands of someone at the marked address.[10] Letter carriers had to be literate—like Jarvis—and reliable and friendly. To ensure the integrity of these important public servants, tampering with the mail was assigned a fixed penalty of seven years transportation that the Mayor, as judge of the Quarter Sessions, was compelled to impose on Jarvis.

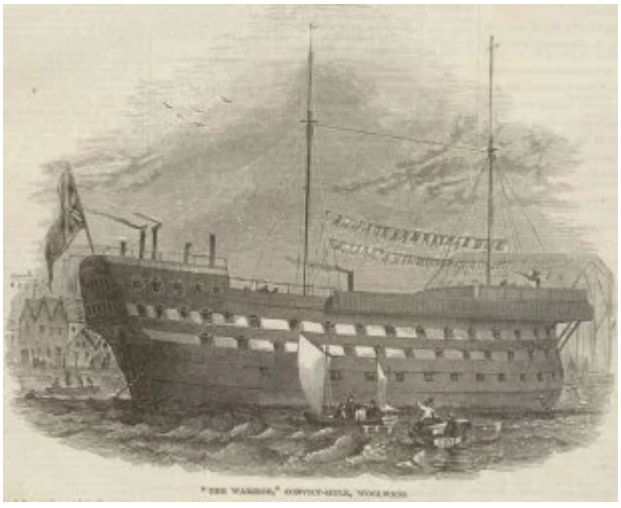
Detail of petition. WJ Jarvis signature under first paragraph. Credit The National Archive

It is likely Sarah Martin's reports of the prisoner's conduct encouraged the magistrates to draw up the petition for clemency on his behalf. William Jarvis signed the formal legalize that characterized such documents. *The prisoner represents his good character & sincere contrition which he states had affected his health. He prays for mitigation*.[11]

Signed by 150 of his townsmen, the petition requested his punishment be remitted or that William Jarvis serve his time in Britain. The impressive number of signatories testifies to the compassion aroused by the prisoner's penitence and despair. The Royal Mail delivered the petition swiftly to the Home Office. It was rejected promptly on 6th June, four days after the Yarmouth Gaoler escorted Jarvis and four other convicts to the *Warrior* hulk, moored at the Woolwich dockyard and arsenal.[12]

From Illustrated London News, 1846. Credit National Archives





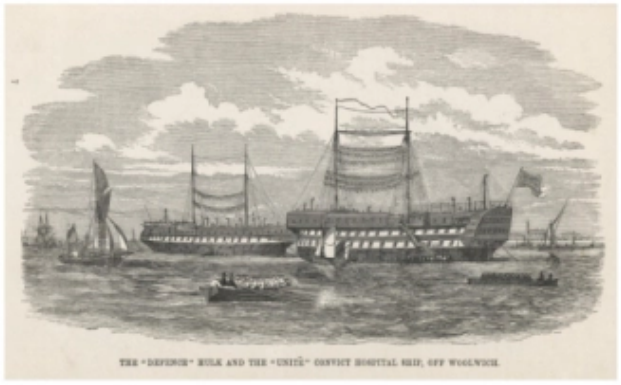
Launched in 1781 as a 74-gun third-rate naval ship, in 1840 *HMS Warrior* had been converted into a hulk to carry around six hundred convicts.[13] The Yarmouth convicts were placed in the large and crowded lower deck which housed nearly half the ship residents, including all new arrivals *still smarting under the pain of disgrace and separation from their homes*, and those undergoing lengthy sentences or whose conduct was *bad*. Unless quickly transported, in three months they might move up to the less crowded middle deck if they behaved well and, within twelve months, to the warmer and better ventilated upper deck.[14]



From Mayhew and Binny, *Criminal Prisons of London*, 1862, credit Lee Jackson, Victorian London

Convicts were employed in general labouring jobs with hours similar to those worked by free labourers—cleaning guns and shot in the arsenal and hauling coal at the docks or loading and unloading vessels.[15] Weakened by distress, William Jarvis was unfit for hard work and soon was admitted to the *Unité* hospital ship where, by September 1841, he was being treated for *sloughing ulcers*, most likely pressure sores from being confined to bed. His health improved by December but in March 1841 he was suffering from bronchitis and by June had been diagnosed with *phthisis* or tuberculosis—then incurable and the largest cause of death among the young adult, urban poor.[16]

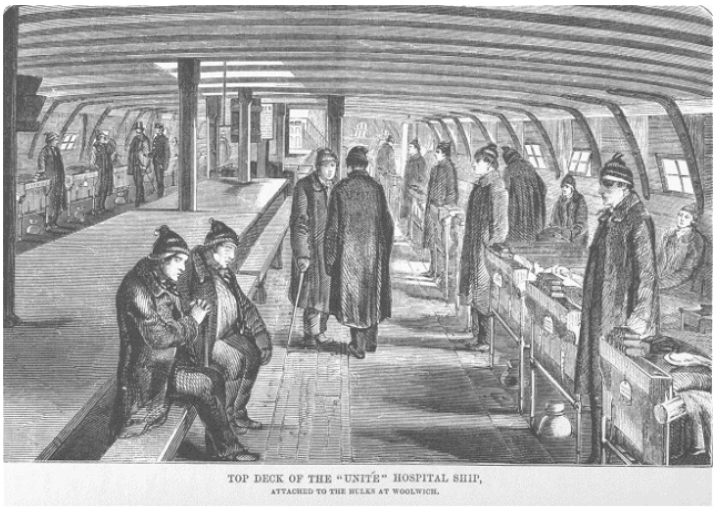
When the *Unité* hospital was inspected in April 1841, shortly before Jarvis's arrival, a hundred convicts were crammed into its beds, the majority with chest conditions. Between October 1840 and May 1841, almost two-thirds of the men from the poorly ventilated lower deck of the Warrior were admitted to hospital, where convicts were particularly vulnerable to infection. Thirty-two men from the *Warrior* died that winter—over 5% of the 608 convicts on board.[17]



Mayhew and Binny, *Criminal Prisons of London* (1862)

Complaints made by convicts to T.S. Duncombe, Radical MP for Finsbury, prompted a select committee inquiry in 1847 into conditions at the Woolwich hulks and the treatment of prisoners, led by William John Williams, whose brief as Prison Inspector had included Great Yarmouth Gaol.[4] Unlike other penal institutions in England and Wales, the hulks were not subject to annual review by the Prison Inspectorate. The inquiry exposed the devastating consequences of the absence of oversight and accountability. Williams's damning indictment of abuses in prison discipline and the physical and moral neglect of the men prompted the immediate retirements of the Superintendent of Convicts and Chief Medical Officer, both long-serving and self-serving.[18] His report allows us to imagine Jarvis's confinement aboard the *Unité,* for Williams reserved his strongest criticisms for the treatment of patients on the hospital ship: their filthy condition,

the paucity of clothing and bedding, the inadequate provision of religious and educational literature, and absence of spiritual attendance on the dying and respect for the dead.



Mayhew and Binny, *Criminal Prisons of London* (1862)

***

Unité hospital ship, Woolwich, February 1843

He knows his time is near. He lies exhausted by the last coughing fit, his shirt newly spotted blackish-red over the brown stains from weeks of sweat and phlegm and blood. He no longer notices the lice crawling through his matted hair. He draws in thin gasps of air that bubble in his throat.

Who will be with him at the end? The chaplain rarely comes and does not learn their names or ask their sorrows. Thank God he has the Testament Miss Martin gave him after the trial. Too tired to reach for it, he mouths the words from his *Book of Prayers*, silently.

Thy testimony is wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

When thy word goeth forth: it giveth light and understanding unto the simple.

I opened my mouth, and drew in my breath: for my delight was in thy commandments.[19]

He used to talk with the men in the iron bedsteads each side of him. When they had strength, they would shuffle up and down the deck, stopping to greet new arrivals and to share misfortunes. Sometimes he would teach young lads their letters, the way Miss Martin did at Yarmouth. But his old companions are gone—one returned to the *Warrior*, the other dead. He has no energy for getting to know their replacements.

Please God he will not be taken at night. He has seen it so often. There are always those waiting to pounce on the dead to rob his pitiful possessions before someone shouts for the guard. Then the body is dragged onto the floor, scrubbed down with a hard brush, and left naked and exposed till morning when it is pulled across the deck to begin its final journey to the dead-house and burial ground.

He should write to his mother and sister. Miss Martin, too, but he can scarce hold a pen. Still, he never gets a reply. He doubts his letters have been posted.[20]

His breathing is easing, the rasp settled into a whistle. He closes his eyes to remember his favourite lines from *Job*.

Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.

By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

It's the east that brings the wind at Yarmouth, he remembers, and the biting frost.

He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

*Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.**[21]***

***

He is speeding over the frozen Ormesby broad, his skates cutting frosted lines through pearly ice. Swerving past the brackish reeds and mounds of snow that mark the water's edge, each time he circles closer to its centre. Pale sunshine glints through the black-laced fingers of skeletal trees. Throwing back his head, he fills his lungs with cold sharp air and whoops in exhileration. Looping the loop, he spins into an endless whirl of dazzling white.

***

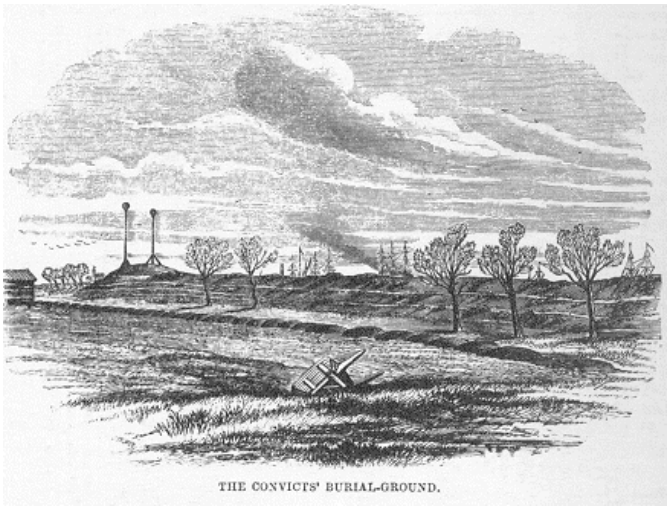
Immediately on his inspection of the *Unité* hospital ship, Captain Williams ordered all the prisoners' clothes and bedding be burned and replaced.[22] Every man was to have a Sunday suit as well as work-day clothes rather than the single set each wore *until it drops to pieces from his person*. The *Unité*'s school, long in abeyance, was to be resumed forthwith and each hulk have a lending library, holding suitable books of an instructive and amusing nature rather than devotional works alone.[23] Patients suffering from pulmonary diseases, the most common complaints on the hulks, should be sent to a hospital on land, away from the damp marshes that bred agues. If this proved infeasible, a large hospital hulk must be provided instead. *Imprisonment, when awarded*, the Inspector insisted, *is not with the intention of being in itself dangerous to life*.[24]

Among Williams's most trenchant criticisms of the hulk regime was the treatment of the dead. *My prison experience satisfies me that there is no surer way of touching the hearts of the living, however obdurate they may be, than by a respectful attention to the dead*. The dying should be attended regularly by medical staff and screened from other patients. Each man should be offered Communion and visited by a minister of his faith, unless otherwise requested. The corpse must be washed respectfully, covered by a pall, and carried to burial by six convicts who should observe the religious rites, given immediately on internment.[25]

But when William John Jarvis passed away on 14th February 1843 his body was rowed ashore to the Arsenal wharf, slung in a wheelbarrow, and pushed by a convict to the dead-house. There, his organs may have been taken for dissection before his corpse was sewn up and finally taken to the unmarked and unconsecrated burial ground. Thrown into a recently dug pit without any shroud, it may have been hours before a priest conducted a perfunctory service over his remains.[26]

Captain Williams's report led to a thorough overhaul of the organization of the hulks, though overcrowding continued as, one by one, the Australian states closed their doors to Britain's convicts in the mid-century decades.[27] Conditions reported by Henry Mayhew in his *Criminal Prisons of London* (1862), revealed improvements in sanitation, education, and spiritual welfare. But the burial ground, photographed and engraved by John Binny, was as bleak as when William Jarvis was laid to rest.

We could just trace the rough outline of disturbed ground at our feet. Beyond this was a shed, where cattle found shelter in bad weather; and to the right the land shelved up between the marsh and the river. There was not even a number over the graves; the last, and it was only a month old, was disappearing. In a few months, the rank grass will have closed over it, as over the story of its inmate. And it is, perhaps, well to leave the names of the unfortunate men, whose bones lie in the clay of this dreary marsh, unregistered and unknown. But the feeling with which we look upon its desolation is irrepressible.[28]



Mayhew and Binny, *Criminal Prisons of London*, 1862

William John Jarvis (1813-1843)

Rest in Peace

I have searched for William John Jarvis for over a decade. Huge thanks to the archivist Kate Raine and Sharon Howard from the Digital Panopticon Project who found me his hospital records and date of death, and put my mind to rest.

[1] Great Yarmouth Gaol Register, 19 March 1841.

[2] *Essex Herald*, 30 March 1841, p. 3.

[3] Great Yarmouth Gaol Register, 19 March 1841. William John Jarvis was baptized 16 September 1813, son of Martha and William Jarvis, sailor. Ancestry.com. *Norfolk, England, Bishop's Transcripts, 1685-1941* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

[4] *Norwich Mercury*, 27 March 1841, p. 3.

[5] Sarah Martin, Everyday Book, 23 June 1841.

[6] Everyday Book, 23-24 June and 2 July 1841.

[7] At the 1841 Census, Martha and Martha Sophia Jarvis were living in Row 136; Class: *HO107*; Piece: *794*; Book: *3*; Civil Parish: *Great Yarmouth*; County: *Norfolk*; Enumeration District: *7*; Folio: *13*; Page: *19*; Line: *2*; GSU roll: *438872.* Jarvis's mother died in 1852. His sister died, unmarried, at Yarmouth Workhouse in 1897; Dobson/Parker family tree, http://person.ancestry.co.uk/tree/17548115/person/28112222216/facts

[8] Everyday Book, 1-2 July 1841.

[9] http://www.royalmailgroup.com/royal-mail-celebrates-175th-anniversary-penny-black-and-origin-one-price-goes-anywhere-universal

[10] http://www.royalmailgroup.com/royal-mail-celebrates-175th-anniversary-penny-black-and-origin-one-price-goes-anywhere-universal

[11] National Archives, TNA_CCC_HO18_057_00061-5 – HO 18 – Home Office: Criminal Petitions, Series II, Petitions (surnames of convicts, I-Z) 1841 July 10-22, Petitions (surnames of convicts, A-Q) 1841 July 23-Aug 5; http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C5413236

[12] Gaol Keeper's Journal, 2 July 1841; TNA_CCC_HO19_009_00104 – Register of Criminal Petitions, c1840-1842; http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C1856650

[13] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Warrior_(1781)

[14] *Accounts and Papers, Crime and Police*, Vol 32, Session 3 February – 12 August 1842 (1842).

[15] Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *The Criminal Prisons of London: And Scenes of Prison Life*, (London: Griffin, Bohn, and Company), 1862,

[16] Mentions of William Jarvis's health in the Quarterly returns of prisoners in hulks: TNA_CCC_HO8_069_00195 – Sep 1841 (Sloughing Ulcer) http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286687; TNA_CCC_HO8_070_0194 – Dec 1841 (Healthy); http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286688; TNA_CCC_HO8_071_0204 – Mar 1842 (Bronchitis); http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286689; TNA_CCC_HO8_072_00187 – Jun 1842 – (Pthisis [Tuberculosis]) http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286690; TNA_CCC_HO8_073_00185 – Sep 1842 – (Phthisis) http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286691; TNA_CCC_HO8_074_0157 – Dec 1842 – (Phthisis); http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286692

[17] *Accounts and Papers*, p. 7.

[18] 1847 [831] [831-II] *Inquiry into the state of the convict establishment at Woolwich. Report and minutes of evidence taken upon an inquiry into the general treatment and condition of the convicts in the hulks at Woolwich*. House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online. ProQuest Information and Learning Company, 2005.

[19] Seán McConville, *A History of English Prison Administration. Volume 1. 1750–1877* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 200-1.

[20] *Horae Canonicae: or, Devotions for the seven stated hours of Prayer*, (London: James Burns, 1841), p. 51

[20] On learning her husband died on the hospital ship 13 September 1846, the wife of J. McK. wrote to John Strickland of the *Unité*, referring to twelve letters from her husband he had mentioned in the notification. See 187 (149) *Convicts (Woolwich). Copy of a report made by the Superintendent of Convicts, to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, respecting the treatment of convicts in the hulks at Woolwich*. Appendix 13, p. 28, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online, ProQuest. This report defended Superintendent John Henry Capper and the Chief Medical Officer Peter Bossy against the allegations in Williams's *Inquiry*.

[21] *Job*, 37: 9-10, 13-14, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+37&version=KJV

[22] *Inquiry*, pp. xv-xvi.

[23] *Inquiry*, p. xiv.

[24] *Inquiry*, p. xxix.

[25] *Inquiry*, p. xv.

[26] Quarterly returns of prisoners in hulks, TNA_CCC_HO8_075_00162 – Mar 1843 – (Died at the hospital on 14 Febr 1843); http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4286693. *Inquiry*, p. xv. 387.

[27] McConville, *A History of English Prison Administration*.

[28] Mayhew and Binny, *The Criminal Prisons of London,* p. 224.

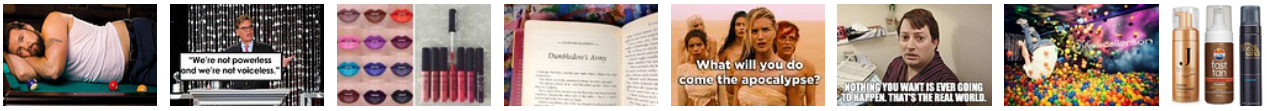
One thought on "The image of grief"



1. stjohnscemetery says:
October 20, 2016 at 12:15 am

This truly is heartbreaking. The image of William as the over-achieving "Flying Postman" and the one of him imagining himself ice-skating again were just so beautiful and very cinematic! What a story! And what an achievement to have finally tracked him down after all those years of searching for him. Such a moving tribute to him, Helen! – from Michaela (aka @SydneyHistory)

Blog at WordPress.com.



The Netherlands Is Arguing About Whether It Should Use Black Face At Christmas

The traditional Dutch festival involves a group of “helpers” who tend to wear blackface and afro wigs, along with hooped earrings and bright red lips.

posted on Nov. 11, 2016, at 1:25 a.m.



Ikran Dahir
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Every year on 5 December the Netherlands celebrates *Sinterklaas dag*, which is St Nicholas’s Day.

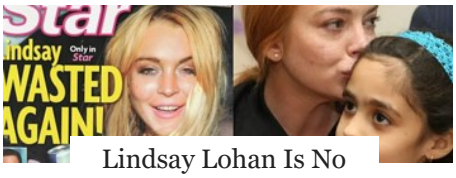


Afp / AFP / Getty Images

The story goes that St Nicholas and his helpers come to the Netherlands and hand out presents during the night to all the good children. The helpers climb down a chimney and deliver the gifts.

Children are told to leave a carrot in a shoe to give to the horses that the helpers are riding.

This is one of the popular songs.



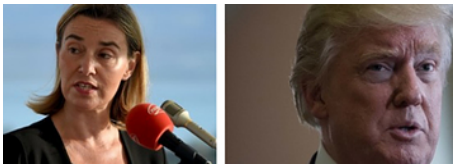
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by Rossalyn Warren

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Sinterklaasliedjes van vroeger - Zie ginds komt de stoomboot

youtube.com

A few weeks before 5 December, St Nicholas and his helpers arrive on a steamboat.



Remko De Waal / AFP / Getty Images

The helpers are known as “Zwarte Piet”, which means “Black Pete”.

Unicode Approves Breastfeeding And Hijab Emoji



The Netherlands Is Arguing About Whether It Should Use Black Face At Christmas



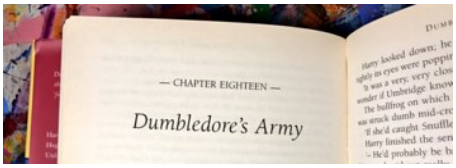
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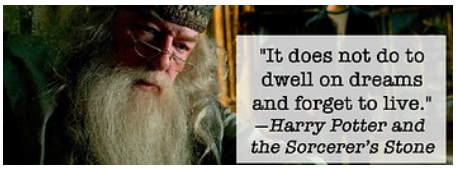
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Dean Mouhtaropoulos / Getty Images

The popular reason that's given for their blackness is that it's from chimney soot. But another version of the story says the helpers are based on black slaves.

During the buildup to Sinterklaas, there's a countdown on national TV called *The Club of Sinterklaas*.



What Job Will You Have Come The Inevitable Apocalypse?



Unicode Approves Breastfeeding And Hijab Emoji



24 Women Who Won't Give Up That Fucking Easily



12 Pictures That Will Restore Your Faith In 2016



18 Obama And Biden Tweets That Will Make You Laugh Despite Everything



29 Pictures To Help You Forget About The Shitshow That Is 2016



youtube.com

There has been a huge ongoing debate in the Netherlands about whether or not wearing blackface in order to be Black Pete is racist.



Vincent Jannink / AFP / Getty Images

Dutch right-wing PVV State members Ton van Kesteren, Matthijs Jansen, and Dennis Ram once dressed as Black Pete and as a form of protest in favour of the tradition.

People say that Black Pete is based on stereotypes of black people from the 19th century.

facebook.com

As a result, there have been protests across the country.



Evert Elzinga / AFP / Getty Images

Yesterday, the first official video journal from St Nicholas was released and it featured a white Pete – but also a black Pete.



youtube.com

This Facebook page, with over 140,000 likes, is campaigning to keep Black Pete.

facebook.com

The caption says: “Nationwide protest: ‘Black Pete is not welcome in the Netherlands because it would be racist. It is a children’s celebration and has nothing to do with racism.’ Agree with this by sharing widely.”

A lot of Dutch people don’t see the link between Black Pete and racism.



Twitter: @riskparty63



"Soot sweep Pete? Which 3-year-old knows what soot is? It becomes "dirty Pete'. Also not good."

However, it appears the tide is turning: One of the biggest broadcasters in the Netherlands has decided against using blackface.



The Dutch ruling party were unhappy with that.



VVD
@VVD

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Het is het kinderfeest van Sinterklaas én Zwarte Piet! #ZwartePiet
8:15 AM - 24 Oct 2016

343 358

In this video Halbe Zijlstra, a politician, calls the scrapping of Black Pete by the Dutch broadcaster RTL a “dumb decision”, as Zwarte Piet is part of a childrens’ festival.

The city of Amsterdam’s administration has also changed the face of Pete into “schoorsteenpiet”, or “chimney Pete”.

Eeva Liukku
@EevaLiukku

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'Geen Zwarte Piet meer in Amsterdam' nos.nl/l/2141314 Wanneer volgt Rotterdam, de stad van vernieuwing & gericht op de toekomst?
10:23 AM - 4 Nov 2016

Geen Zwarte Piet meer in Amsterdam, alleen Schoorsteenpie...
Het plan is lange tijd stil gehouden om buiten de discussie te blijven rond Zwarte Piet.
nos.nl

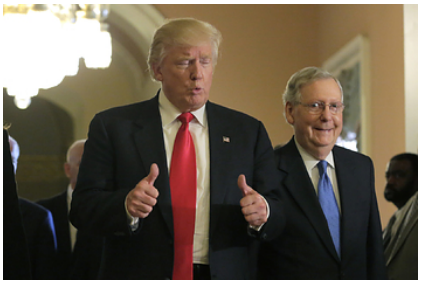
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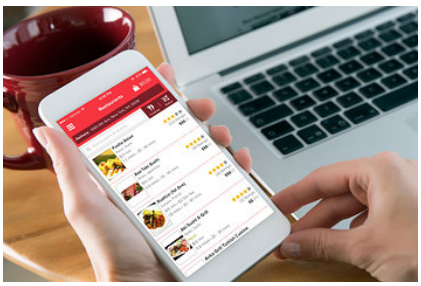
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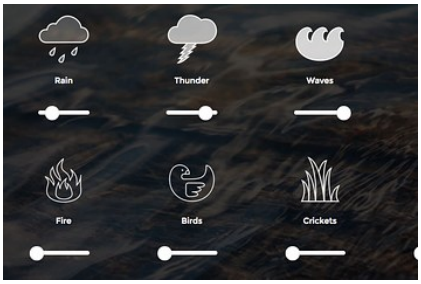
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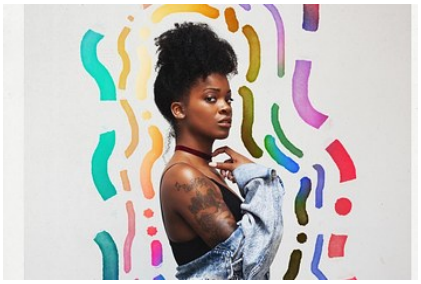
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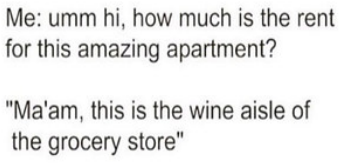
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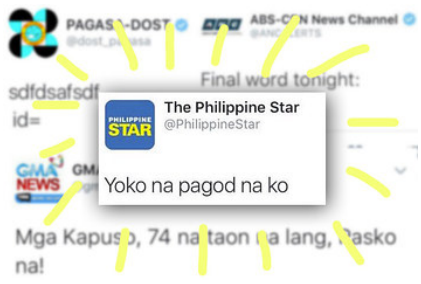
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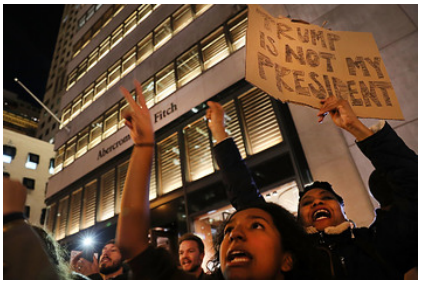
Literally Just A Bunch Of Babies With Dogs To Make You Smile



21 Warming Whiskey Cocktails To Sip This Fall

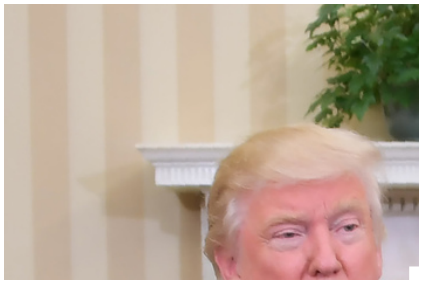


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OBJECT RECORD

New Search



Armed Forces History, Division of History of Technology, National Museum of American History

Other views





View this object in context

Stubby

Catalog #: 58280M Accession #: 210736
Credit: Armed Forces History, Division of History of Technology, National Museum of American History

Dimensions / Weight

Dimensions: 22" H x 26" W x 11" D

Physical Description

Stuffed dog, blanket adorned with medals.

Specific History

While training for combat on the fields of Yale University in 1917, Private J. Robert Conroy found a brindle puppy with a short tail. He named him "Stubby", and soon the dog became the mascot of the 102nd Infantry, 26th Yankee Division. He learned the bugle calls, the drills, and even a modified dog salute as he put his right paw on his right eyebrow when a salute was executed by his fellow soldiers. Stubby had a positive effect on morale, and was allowed to remain in the camp, even though animals were forbidden. When the division shipped out for France aboard the SS *Minnesota*, Private Conroy smuggled Stubby aboard. Hidden in the coal bin until the ship was far at sea, Stubby was brought out on deck where the sailors were soon won over by the canine soldier. Stubby was once again smuggled off the ship and was soon discovered by Pvt. Conroy's commanding officer. The CO allowed Stubby to remain after Stubby gave him a salute. When the Yankee Division headed for the front lines in France, Stubby was given special orders allowing him to accompany the Division to the front lines as their official mascot. The 102nd Infantry reached the front lines on the 5 February 1918. Stubby soon became accustomed to the loud rifles and heavy artillery fire. His first battle injury occurred from gas exposure; he was taken to a nearby field hospital and nursed back to health. The injury left him sensitive to the tiniest trace of gas. When the Division was attacked in an early morning gas launch, most of the troops were asleep. Stubby recognized the gas and ran through the trench barking and biting at the soldiers, rousing them to sound the gas alarm, saving many from injury. Stubby also had a talent for locating wounded men between the trenches of the opposing armies; he would listen for the sound of English and then go to the location, barking until paramedics arrived or leading the lost soldiers back to the safety of the trenches. He even caught a German soldier mapping out the layout of the Allied trenches. The soldier called to Stubby, but he put his ears back and began to bark. As the German ran, Stubby bit him on the legs, causing the soldier to trip and fall. He continued to attack the man until the United States soldiers arrived. For capturing an enemy spy, Stubby was put in for a promotion to the rank of Sergeant by the commander of the 102nd Infantry. He became the first dog to be given rank in the United States Armed Forces. Later, Stubby was injured during a grenade attack, receiving a large amount of

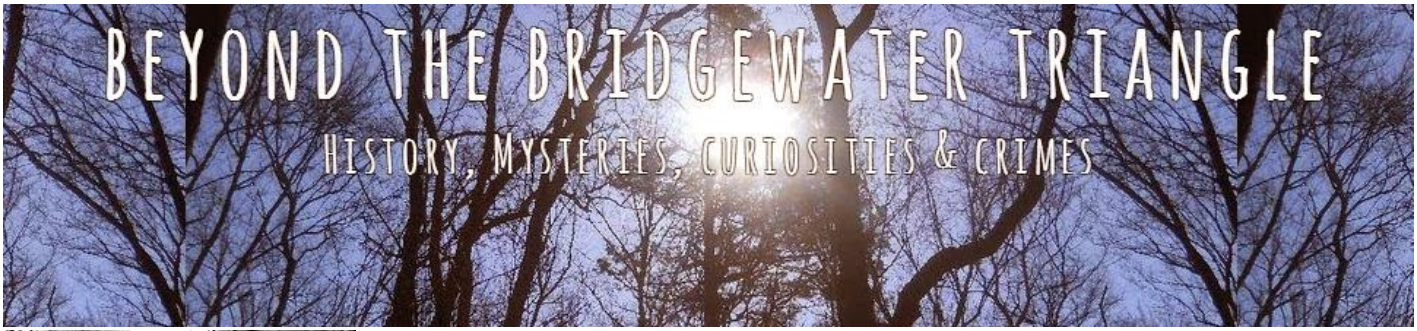
shrapnel in his chest and leg. He was rushed to a field hospital and later transferred to a Red Cross Recovery Hospital for additional surgery. When Stubby became well enough to move around at the hospital, he visited wounded soldiers, boosting their morale. By the end of the war, Stubby had served in 17 battles. He led the American troops in a pass and review parade and later visited with President Woodrow Wilson. He visited the White House twice and met Presidents Harding and Coolidge. Stubby was awarded many medals for his heroism, including a medal from the Humane Society which was presented by General John Pershing, the Commanding General of the United States Armies. He was awarded a membership in the American Legion and the Y.M.C.A. When his master, J. Robert Conroy, began studying law at Georgetown University, Stubby became the mascot of the Georgetown Hoyas. He died in 1926.

Keywords

Countries: France, United States
War: World War I
Service: Army

The Red Headed Hitchhiker: The Four Stories That Made Him Infamous & And the Author Behind the Legend

thebridgewatertriangle.com





Ask anyone familiar with the Bridgewater Triangle, "Who is the most famous resident ghost?" and they'll tell you: It's "The Red Headed Hitchhiker of Route 44. This menacing, disheveled-looking phantom, dressed in a red plaid shirt with a messy red beard and crazy hair is said to haunt a five-mile stretch of road at the beginning of 38-mile long route 44. The legend of "The Red Headed Hitchhiker" was first laid out by Rehoboth historian, anthropologist, and archaeologist, Charles Turek Robinson in his 1994 classic, *"The New England Ghost Files: An Authentic Compendium of Frightening Phantoms.*" Robinson called the hitchhiker "The Red-Headed Phantom of Route 44" and labeled the legends of this maniacal, horrific spirit, "Ghost File #7." Robinson includes 57 "Ghost Files" in his book, although he collected close to 200 first hand accounts of run-ins with ghosts in his research for this work. Robinson meticulously interviewed each witness three times, as to ensure their authenticity.

Five different local residents came forward to Robinson with similar accounts about a strange man sighted on the dark leg of route 44 that connects Seekonk with Rehoboth. In each of the accounts, the red-headed man looks 100% real, but never speaks, his countenance and blank, his eyes are empty, yet he smiles eerily. And often laughs frantically.

The first witness of "Ghost File #7" is a man Robinson calls, "Joe." Joe reported: "I saw a man's face outside the car, pressed against the passenger-side window. This was physically impossible...my car was traveling about fifty miles an hour. The face was looking in at me, grinning. I could see that the man had red hair and was wearing a red plaid shirt. I swerved off the highway and brought my car to a stop. But that time, the man had vanished. After about ten minutes I finally calmed down enough to restart my car and drive home. That incident has left me shaken up for the past twenty-five years." Joe's encounter took place in the winter of 1969.

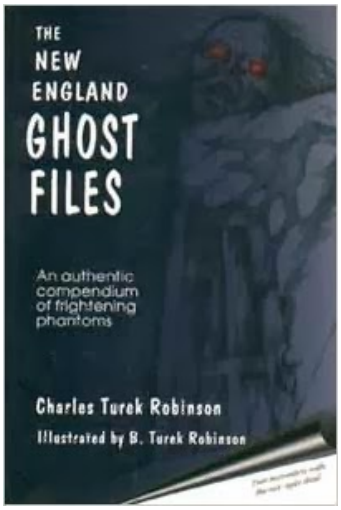
Robinson calls the next witness, "Fred Durpis." One summer night at around 10 o'clock back in 1973, "Fred" saw the "hitchhiker." Fred pulled over to give him a lift and saw the man running toward his truck in his rear-view mirror. The "man" climbed in and Fred asked him where he was headed. The man just sat there in silence, smiling. Again, Fred asked, "Where are you going?" The man just sat there in the cab of the truck, smiling. That was enough for "Fred." He pulled the truck over and ordered the man out. The hitchhiker complied. But instead of opening truck door, he simply disappeared. "He just stared to get very hazy until I could behind to see through him."

The next tale Robinson tells is of a woman who named "Barbara" who encountered the phantom in February of 1981. The woman was driving along route 44--going about sixty miles per hour--when suddenly she hit a man fitting the description of the infamous hitchhiker: Red hair, red plaid shirt. Only when she hit the man, her car drove right through him.

"There was no time to brake or even swerve the car. In a matter of seconds I ran him over. I mean, I thought I had." Barbara stopped the car, thinking she had just killed someone. Only, no one was there.

Walking back to her car after thoroughly checking the road, the woman heard something that chilled her to the bone.

"I heard this loud, horrible laughter coming from the woods to the side of the road, right near the spot where thought I hit the man...The laughter was terrible." She got into her car and drove away, stunned. To her horror, after driving down route 44 not even a mile, there was the man again in the middle of the road and again she drove right through him. Again she stopped the car, but this time she did not get out, only rolled down the car window. Again, she heard the laughter. At that point the woman booked it out of there.



The last story in Robinson's chapter on "Ghost File #7" is about a Swansea couple he calls "Harry and Sheena Hanson." Harry and Sheena were driving route 44 in October of 1984 when their car broke down. Harry told Sheena to stay in the car, while he tried to find a pay phone to call AAA road service. The man makes his way down the dark road when he spots what he describes as a "sloppy looking guy with red messy hair" sitting on the side of the road.

The man asked the stranger if he knew where the closest pay phone is. The stranger didn't answer. The man asked him again. The messy red-haired man only sat in silence staring at him. So the man asked again. And again. And there was silence. One more time the man asked and now he notices what he describes as an "odd grin" upon the stranger's face. The man asked the stranger if he is okay. Upon posing the question, the stranger's face changed. The man described the eerie nighttime encounter with the "hitchhiker" this way: "Suddenly, the man's face got very strange. He stopped grinning, he twisted his mouth and I noticed that there was something wrong with his eyes. They were all clouded over--no pupils or anything. Just blank and all white. I began to feel weird and started to walk away from him. As I hurried away, I heard the man laughing. I turned around, but he was no longer there. I mean, I could no longer see him there, but I still heard the laughing. It was coming from just a few feet away from me. And the laughing kept switching locations. First in front of me, then behind me, then to the left of me. It was bizarre."

The man ran back to the car in fright only to find his wife standing outside of it, visibly terrified. She tells her husband that after he left she had turned on the car radio and was listening to a song when to her horror suddenly the song wasn't coming out of the radio anymore: A very creepy man's voice came out of the car's speakers instead. The voice taunted her, called her by name, all the while laughing hysterically.

"Is it just the spread of local folklore that accounts for so many separate reports involving the same alleged phantom? The skeptics among us might say so, though it should be noted that the witnesses interviewed by the author were intelligent, non-superstitious people who related their accounts sincerely, consistently, and credibly. In all cases, they had clearly been affected by their very strange experiences," Robinson states in "Ghost Files."

Charles Turek Robinson at Village Cemetery, Rehoboth. Copyright Taunton Gazette. For full article, click here.

Robinson--a Harvard educated anthropologist, archaeologist, and writer--was thrown into the world of tracking and recording local ghost stories quite by accident, after running an article one Halloween featuring the work of one of the country's first ghost hunters, Hans Holtzer. In his research, a story about a poltergeist in his hometown of Rehoboth emerged. Soon after the article was published, Robinson's editor started receiving letters addressed to " Charles Turek Robinson" from locals, eager to relay their own accounts of supernatural activity. And the father of a legend was born. In an interview in the May, 2002 edition of "Cyril Magazine," Robinson revealed: "Many of the accounts that were related to me by readers were silly and contained many of the usual stereotypes....I rejected those. However, there were a few that were very provocative in their originality. They did not contain the usual stereotypes and sensationalism. They contained elements so unusual and so original that if



these people hadn't really had these experiences, they should have been writing or telescripting in Hollywood."

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The rise and rise of the pumpkin in Germany

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The Local



The rise and rise of the pumpkin in Germany

Published: 12 Oct 2016 11:41 GMT+02:00
Updated: 12 Oct 2016 11:42 GMT+02:00

Germany has experienced a "pumpkin boom" in recent years. Where has this Teutonic love for an all-American vegetable come from, and where will it end?

This October in Germany, you won't be able to glance at food magazines on the shelves at REWE without coming across a pumpkin recipe. *Kürbissuppe* has become a staple in many households, and it appears on many restaurants' autumn and winter seasonal menus. The vegetable is so popular now, even German Starbucks has started selling their famed pumpkin spice in store.

What was once regarded as the food of the poor has now become popular among wide swathes of the German public due to the sheer variety available in markets and on supermarket shelves, Martin Krumbein of the Erfurt Horticultural Education and Research institute told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) in 2013.

Pumpkins are native to North America, and had been used by Native Americans for centuries prior to the arrival of European settlers, who both adopted them into their diet and brought them back to Europe. Since their first introduction to the continent, pumpkins have made quite a splash across the pond, specifically in Germany, and especially in recent years.

But today you won't find the largest pumpkin festival in the world in the USA or Canada. It's in Germany. The Ludwigsburg Pumpkin Festival (Kürbisausstellung), held every year in the small city of Ludwigsburg in Baden-Württemberg, currently holds that prestigious title.



One of the events at this year's festival: The Pumpkin Canoe Regatta. Photo: DPA.

More than 450,000 pumpkins descend on this small city every year, outnumbering Ludwigsburg's inhabitants by more than 5 to 1. And 800 different species are represented among the around 150 tons of pumpkin that make it to the city.

What began in 2000, inspired by two brothers' (Beat and Martin Jucker) visit to a Swiss pumpkin exhibition, now attracts around

400,000 pumpkin lovers over a nine-week period. The festival is entering its 16th year and is a symbol of the growing popularity of the pumpkin in Germany today.

2014 was a special year for the festival, as it played host to the world's heaviest pumpkin during its European Pumpkin Weigh Off. This Swiss monster, weighing over 1 metric-ton, also meant the title went to a pumpkin grown outside the US for the first time.

Pumpkin fest organizer Stefan Hinner told The Local that the same pattern of increased pumpkin consumption that Krumbein saw on supermarket shelves could be observed among the visitors attending the festival.

At its inception, around 90 percent of the pumpkins brought to the festival were ornamental and 10 percent were sold to eat. However, in recent years that figure has almost completely reversed, with more and more festival goers taking home a pumpkin for their table.

Demand for pumpkins in Germany has grown significantly in recent years. From 2006 to 2013, the amount of pumpkins being produced in the *Bundesrepublik* increased by about two thirds. In 2013, a colossal 69,000 tons of the vegetable were harvested in the country, according to statistics gathered by FAZ.

This "pumpkin-boom" cannot only be attributed to Germans' newfound affinity for the delicious taste of pumpkin soup on increasingly cold autumn nights, but to another increasingly popular American import: Halloween.

The German Federal Statistics Office, as reported in FAZ, attributes the pumpkin's in vogue status in German to the rise in popularity and proliferation of the American custom of Halloween.



Photo: DPA The Jack O' Lantern is now an inseparable symbol of Halloween.

The carving of pumpkins may date back to the jack-o'-lantern, and the long tradition of carving lanterns into these vegetables in Britain and Ireland, however the carved pumpkin has now become part and parcel of American-style Halloween celebrations. The increased production of pumpkins can be linked to the growing popularity of Halloween, especially among younger people, across Germany.

Story continues below…

Halloween is now big business in Germany, and thus big business for pumpkins. The Halloween industry is worth an estimated €160 million to the country's economy, according to a Spiegel interview with Dieter Tschorn, a public relations consultant widely credited with popularizing the festival in Germany in the mid-1990s. Tschorn attributes the sheer amount of pumpkins sold in Germany to this growing Halloween phenomenon.

A festive day placed only behind Christmas and Easter in terms of economic clout, means that more pumpkins than ever are being produced and carved in Germany.

A farmer from Mecklenburg-West Pomerania prepares for Halloween. Photo: DPA.

So, from North America to Europe, from a food reserved for the poor to a gourmet delicacy, right up to the largest pumpkin festival in the world, the rise of the pumpkin in Germany has been a stratospheric one. The question is, will the orange bubble continue to grow or will it burst?

By Charley-Kai John



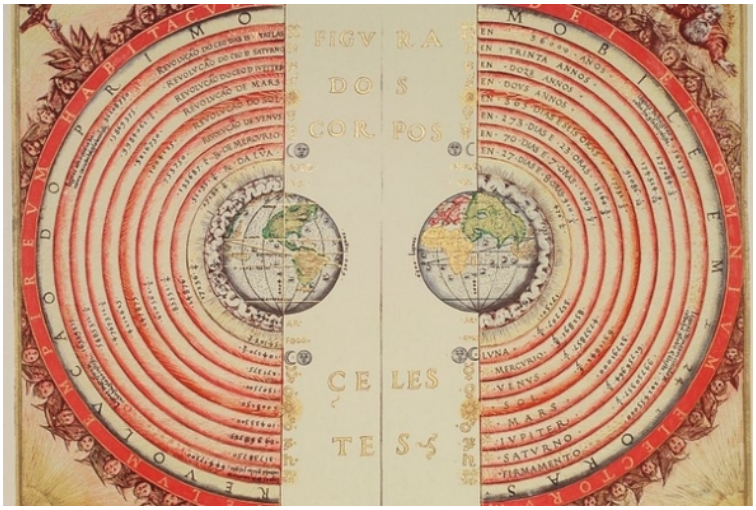
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The Rise of Neo-Geocentrism

Prominent scientists are propagating new versions of the old idea that reality revolves around us

- By John Horgan on November 2, 2016



You are a born narcissist. You know you are conscious, and you don't worry about whether others are too, because only your experiences matter. The world is a stage for the drama of your life. You are reality's epicenter.

As you grow up, you realize others matter too. Your narcissism expands to encompass people in your family, tribe, even humanity as a whole. Perhaps you, personally, aren't reality's reason for being, but your species surely is.

These assumptions come so naturally to us that for most of our pre-history and history we didn't question them. Religions reflect our self-centeredness, and science did too, at first. The Sun, Moon, planets, stars and entire cosmos whirl around the Earth, our home. Don't our eyes tell us as much every day and night?

It took courage as well as imagination, painstaking observations and rational analysis for Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo to challenge geocentrism. Their insights, met initially by incredulity and hostility, helped us escape our primal self-centeredness.

Today we know Earth is only one of nine planets orbiting the Sun (I do not belittle Pluto), which is one of billions of stars in our galaxy, which is one of countless galaxies in the universe, which exploded into existence 14 billion years ago. Our planet formed 4.5 billion years ago, and a billion years later singled-celled organisms emerged. A few hundred thousand years ago, a split second in cosmic time, we appeared and assumed the whole shebang was made for us. Call us *Homo narcissus*.

Our eventual recognition of how minuscule we are compared to the immensity of space and time has been humbling. But that revelation should be a source of pride, too. We had the intelligence and maturity to escape the delusional self-regard and superstition of the dark ages. We earned the label *Homo sapiens*.

But recently prominent scientists and philosophers have been propagating ideas that restore us—more specifically, our minds, or consciousness--to the center of things. I call this perspective *neo-geocentrism*.

As far as we know, consciousness is property of only one weird type of matter that evolved relatively recently here on Earth: brains. Neo-geocentrists nonetheless suggest that consciousness pervades the entire cosmos. It might even have been the spark that ignited the big bang.

Neo-geocentric thinking has always lurked at the fringes of science, but it is becoming more mainstream. That was apparent at “Sages & Scientists,” convened in September by holistic-health mogul Deepak Chopra. The meeting called for “a new science” that “can accept consciousness as fundamental and not just something generated by the brain.”

One expects this outlook from Chopra, who once belonged to the Transcendental Meditation movement and remains sympathetic toward its Hindu metaphysics. But other speakers expressing neo-geocentric sentiments included neuroscientist Rudolph Tanzi of Harvard, who has co-authored two books with Chopra; psychologist Donald Hoffman of the University of California at Irvine; and psychiatrist Daniel Siegel of UCLA.

Neo-geocentric thinking was also rampant at consciousness powwows I attended in Tucson, Arizona, last spring and at New York University last fall, where tenured professors from major institutions proposed that consciousness matters at least as much as matter. Here are specific examples of neo-geocentrism:

Information Theories of Consciousness. Claude Shannon invented information theory in the 1940s to quantify and boost the efficiency of communication systems. Ever since, scientists and philosophers have sought to transform it into a theory of everything. Information-based theories are all neo-geocentric, because information—definable as the capacity of a system to surprise an observer--presumes the existence of consciousness.

Integrated Information Theory (IIT). Invented by neuroscientist Guilio Tononi and championed by neuroscientist Christof Koch and physicist Max Tegmark, integrated information theory postulates that any system with interacting parts—a proton, say, which consists of three quarks--is processing information and hence is conscious. IIT revives the mystical doctrine of **panpsychism**, which asserts that consciousness dwells within all matter.

Quantum Theories of Consciousness. Quantum mechanics has long provoked neo-geocentric musings. Is the cat in the box alive or dead? Is that photon a wave or a particle? Well, it depends on how—or whether—we look at it. Quantum mechanics, physicist John Wheeler proposed decades ago, implies that we live in a “**participatory universe**,” the existence of which somehow depends on us.

Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR). Some quantum interpreters hold that conscious observation causes probabilistic, “superposed” quantum states to collapse into a single state. Orch-OR, invented by physicist Roger Penrose and anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff, flips this notion on its head, claiming that the collapse of superposed states causes consciousness. Because such collapses occur in all matter, not just brains, Penrose and Hameroff conclude that consciousness “could be deeply related to the operation of the laws of the universe.”

Reality Is a Simulation. Descartes fretted over whether the world is an illusion foisted on us by a demon. Philosopher Nick Bostrom has revived this conceit, conjecturing that “we are living in a computer simulation” generated by a high-tech civilization. Physicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, philosopher David Chalmers and tech-titan Elon Musk have expressed sympathy for the simulation thesis, which is creationism repackaged for nerds.

Anthropic Principle. As physicists lose hope of explaining why our universe is the way it is, they have become increasingly fond of the anthropic principle, which decrees that our universe must be

as we observe it to be, because otherwise we wouldn't be here to observe it. Modern proponents of this neo-geocentric tautology include Stephen Hawking, Sean Carroll and Brian Greene.

Buddhism. Even though it is 2,500 years old, Buddhism deserves to be on this list because of its remarkable popularity among western intellectuals. It is not a religion, they often insist, but only a way to understand and relax the mind. But Buddhism, like Catholicism, the religion of my childhood, espouses a supernatural metaphysics, in which the cosmos serves as the stage for our spiritual journey toward nirvana.

I get the appeal of neo-geocentrism. Although I abandoned Catholicism by my early teens, psychedelics aroused my suspicion that the universe was designed for us. A 1981 trip left me convinced for longer than I care to admit that we were created by a God suffering from multiple-personality disorder.

Although I reluctantly abandoned that mad theology, I glommed onto neo-geocentric ideas like Wheeler's participatory universe and "it from bit," a fusion of information theory and quantum mechanics. Wheeler and his fellow neo-geocentrist Freeman Dyson were two of my favorite thinkers.

The cold, hard skeptic in me rejects neo-geocentrism as the kind of fuzzy-headed mysticism that science helps us overcome. Neo-geocentrism represents the projection of our fears and desires, our yearning to matter. Its surging popularity is, perhaps, a symptom of our era's social-media-enabled self-infatuation.

But if neo-geocentrism bugs me, so do militant materialism and atheism, which belittle our craving for transcendent meaning, and seem oblivious to the extraordinary improbability of our existence. And after all, without minds to ponder it, the universe might as well not exist.

I guess what I'm advocating is a simple acknowledgment that no theory or theology can do justice to the mystery of our existence. That modest agnosticism, it seems to me, is what *Homo sapiens* would choose.

Further Reading:

The Mind–Body Problem, Scientific Regress and "Woo"

Dispatch from the Desert of Consciousness Research, Part 1

Christof Koch on Free Will, the Singularity and the Quest to Crack Consciousness

Why information can't be the basis of reality

Can Integrated Information Theory Explain Consciousness?

Stephen Hawking's "new" theory of everything is the same old CRAP

The Singularity and the Neural Code

Is Scientific Materialism "Almost Certainly False"?

Why I Don't Dig Buddhism

Meta-Meditation: A Skeptic Meditates on Meditation

What Should We Do With Our Visions of Heaven and Hell?

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The smuggler's return

conviction19c

convictionblog.com

October 31, 2016

5 February 1840

Charles Lewis Redwood stands at the helm, steering the *St Leonard* into the Yare. He remembers the tightening of his stomach the last time he watched Yarmouth coming into view, shackled with his men aboard the Admiralty cutter as his sloop, the *Nancy*, was towed into port.

Deftly, he slips the *St Leonard* up against the quay and oversees his men unloading her cargo. Honest fare, now, he carries between Harwich and London. Not like the bales of tea and barrels of brandy, stashed in the hulk, discovered when the excise officers intercepted the *Nancy* crossing the Yarmouth Roads, disguised as a fishing smack.

It's four years since he was on this quay. The Harwich men were waiting outside the Gaol to greet the five smugglers from the *Nancy* after six-months imprisonment. Singing and slapping each other's shoulders, they marched down to the dock and into the nearest tavern. He was impatient to return home but first he must treat the band of smugglers for supporting his men during their confinement with regular supplies of food and tobacco. It felt ungrateful to watch his friends supping their ale and not join them in a glass.

After all this time, he was glad to get the commission to come back to Yarmouth. At last he can call on the prison teacher he promised to visit. He seeks directions to Row 57. Will Miss Martin remember him?

She recognizes the sailor instantly, welcoming him into her little room. He's taken aback by its bare simplicity. Brewing the tea strong, she manages to get two cups out of the teapot, made only for one.

It was a hard time, he tells her, when he left the Gaol. Fourteen months he spent, searching for honest work. With his wife and children to feed, it was a sore temptation not to go back to the contraband. But he stood by what his teacher taught him. Now, he says proudly, he is *master of a respectable merchant's ship*.

The mariner's eyes light up when she asks after his family. Sarah, his wife, has another baby on the way. William, his first-born, has become a sailor. He's a strapping lad. Good and steady.

The teacher rummages through a box of envelopes, and takes out the letters of thanks from Edmund Cole and his wife, to read their cheery news. Like Redwood, the first mate had struggled when he returned home. But Cole had visited last summer and told Miss Martin how all the *Nancy*'s crew had finally left off smuggling. They are doing well, Charles Redwood nods. Fine men. He sees them often. The teacher is happy to hear him confirm Edmund Cole's reports.

Shyly, before he leaves, the former prisoner takes from his sack two presents for the teacher. He bought them in France, a token of his gratitude for all she has done for him. He hopes she will like them. But sat on the table between them, the pretty vase and jewellery box look out of place, he thinks.

Once the master mariner bids her farewell, Sarah Martin opens the Liberated Prisoners book and writes of his visit and gifts—*a vase covered in shells, and a curious glass box—his gratitude for what he thought his obligation to me*. At the end of their confinement, she remembers smiling, the smugglers asked to speak with the prisoners, *and begged them to listen to her advice, and treat her with respect*.

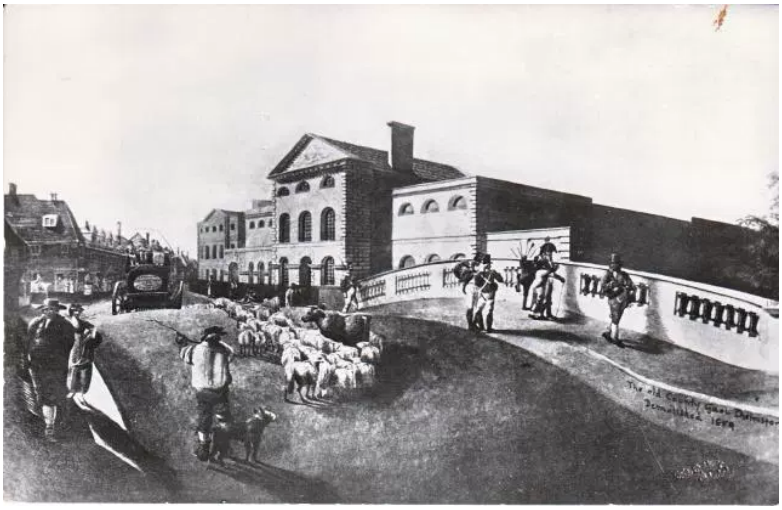
She picks up the vase and box, and hesitates, weighing the strange trinkets in her hands.

I am not sure if she stands them on the mantelpiece or hides them away in a cupboard.[1]

***

The smugglers on the *Nancy* had been in prison before, as they told Sarah Martin. Why did her teaching touch them when previous *correction* had failed to deter their illegal activities?

In 1832 Charles Redwood was found in charge of the *Union of Ipswich*, sailing as a collier hauler with contraband concealed under the coal. His men were pressed into the Navy for five years—a gain for the Admiralty that won the services of experienced sailors, and for the Home Office that saved on the cost of imprisoning them. Of the six crew members, only the cabin boy was acquitted, as at the Yarmouth trial. But the captain must be made an example. Unable to afford the £100 fine, Redwood was sent to Springfield Gaol, a convict prison near Chelmsford.[2]



Springfield/Chelmsford Gaol (currently being researched by former prison officers)

Springfield opened in 1828 as a modern penitentiary, designed in the radial style to ensure close observation of inmates, with a treadwheel for hard labour. Under the silent system, inmates were prohibited from speaking with each other, on pain of punishment.[3]



From *Chatterbox*, 1891

Housed together at Yarmouth Gaol and able to converse freely, the *Nancy* men laboured keenly at their lessons. While agreeing with the teacher that smuggling was a form of *fraud* involving *habitual lying*, they doubted they could afford to leave the trade. Discussing their concerns with Miss Martin, and mulling over the costs and benefits when she left, the five men began to embrace Christian reclamation as a group.

Mateship had bound the *Nancy* men together on the open seas. It sustained them in prison, with gifts from the smugglers' band—one of the illicit friendly societies formed by contraband men. The vision of Christian fellowship, offered by the prison teacher, shared much in common with the values of fraternity and mutual obligation expressed by friendly societies across the trades, often symbolized in Christian terms, especially in the figures of the Good Samaritan and St Christopher.[4] They were embedded, too, in the sea-faring life where the maritime spirit of hardy independence was built on the interdependence of crewmen. Those same values girded the men in the difficult months after release, when the older ones kept a careful eye on their younger mates.

Determination to leave the smuggling trade was surely strengthened by the strain their imprisonment had placed on the men's families and the fear of transportation if they were caught again. When Charles Redwood was arrested in 1836, his son Lewis was just two-years-old.

The census returns for the Redwood household suggest the precarious nature of sailoring life but also the principles of kinship and reciprocity that kept the master mariner on the straight-and-narrow and his family together. At each census the sailor and his wife lived at a different address but always in the streets by the harbour. In 1841, five of their eight sons and daughters, were with them in Castle Street. When the children left home, they remained close by.

All Redwood's sons became mariners and his daughters married sailors or men employed in trades connected with the sea. In 1851 his widowed daughter Jane had returned to live with her parents, while she worked as a charwoman to support her young daughter and newborn son. By 1861, now remarried to another sailor, she was living next door to her mother Sarah, who was caring for two of her grandchildren.[5]

The former smuggler passed away in 1859, aged sixty-five. Proudly, his family or his friends placed notices in the *Essex Standard* and *Chelmsford Chronicle*, to note the death at Harwich of *Mr Charles Redwood, mariner of that town*.[6]



Early photograph of Harwich, 1850s. Note the figure in left foreground. Credit Essex Record Office.

***

At the click of the latch, young Lewis runs squealing to the door and tugs at his father's breeches. Sarah is all smiles. He feels the baby, firm in her belly, as he presses her in his arms. This one will not know his Daddy go to gaol.

Sitting in his chair by the hearth, he keeps an eye on the potatoes bubbling on the stove while his daughters set the table. Suddenly he is hungry as the herrings, bought today in Yarmouth, sizzle smoky-sweet on the griddle. Up on the mantelpiece, Sarah has added the vase to the collection of shell decorations, beloved by sailors, which her husband has brought back from his travels. The

new jewellery box has pride of place, already containing her blue bead necklace and money for next week's housekeeping. Its glinting glass casts flickering rays of lamplight onto the picture above. Cut out from a magazine, it's his favourite print, *A Sailor's Family* by Rowlandson.[7]

He turns away from the merry picture and looks at his own happy band, gathered around the table, his wife beckoning him. For a moment he thinks of Miss Martin, sat at the table in her spartan room, writing out verses for the prisoners to copy. Charles Redwood shakes his head and then joins the homecoming supper, beaming.



Thomas Rowlandson, 'A Sailor's Home' (1787), Metropolitan Museum of Art, credit Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1833

***

And because everyone loves a sailor and I cannot access my pinterest account, here are more returning sailors (and some smugglers)…

A more raunchy Sailor's Return by Rowlandson. Does the flitch of bacon suggest impending marriage?



Rowlandson, A Sailor's Return from Active Service. Credit Metropolitan Museum of Art

More typical of Rowlandson and of bawdy style of many Sailor's Returns



Rowlandson, The Sailor's Return. Credit Yale Centre for British Art

The Sailor Boy's Return from a Prosperous Voyage

A Sailor's Return in Peace. Credit National Maritime Museum

Compare and contrast…

A Married Sailor's Return, c. 1800. Julius Caesar Ibbetson. Credit Tate

An Unmarried Sailor's Return, c. 1800. Julius Caesar Ibbetson. Credit Tate





The Sailor’s Farewell and The Sailor’s Return were familiar motifs on pottery

Credit Sunderland Lustre. United Collections

And then there was The Smuggler’s Return…





David Wilkie, The Smugglers Return, wikigallery





The Smuggler at Home after a Successful Cruise, Henry Perlee Parker 1850

Smugglers Alarmed. Staffordshire Archives & Heritage

The Arrest of the Smuggler in West Looe, 1820. Credit Looe Guildhall

Fortunately, perhaps, I’ve lost the link to an extremely lewd and graphic set of Sailors Returns which I’m sure Charles Redwood did not display on his walls!







[1] Based on the following sources: Great Yarmouth Borough Gaol Committal and Discharge Book, Sept 1831-Dec 1838, Y/L 2/6, 18 May 1835; 1840 [258] Inspectors of Prisons of Great Britain II, Northern and Eastern District, Fifth Report, *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online* (Proquest, 2005), 126–27 and 1839 [199], Inspectors of Prisons, Fourth Report, ibid, p. 172. Charles Edward Lewis was born April-June 1840: FreeBMD. *England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006. Born in 1819, William was a sailor by 1841, living with his wife Mary on Church Street in Harwich, married to Mary: Class: *HO107*; Piece: *344*; Book: *19*; Civil Parish: *St Nicholas*; County: *Essex*; Enumeration District: *2*; Folio: *29*; Page: *17*; Line: *19*; GSU roll: *241380*. Details of Edward Cole from the Liberated Prisoners Book are from 1839 [199] Inspectors of Prisons, 173–74. For further analysis of Redwood and other apparently reclaimed prisoners, see Helen Rogers, 'Kindness and Reciprocity: Liberated Prisoners and Christian Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of Social History* 47.3 (Spring 2014): 721-45, doi: 10.1093/jsh/sht106.

[2] *Essex Standard*, 29 September 1832, p. 3.

[3] See extract from *White's Directory of Essex*, 1848 at ww.historyhouse.co.uk/articles/prison.html, which also includes excerpts on the gaol from the Inspector's Reports. Accessed 25 October 2016.

[4] Daniel Weinbren, 'The Good Samaritan, Friendly Societies and the Gift Economy', *Social History*, 31:3 (2006), pp. 319-336, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071020600764464

[5] 1841 Census; Class: *HO107*; Piece: *344*; Book: *20*; Civil Parish: *St Nicholas*; County: *Essex*; Enumeration District: *4*; Folio: *14*; Page: *20*; Line: *6*; GSU roll: *241380*; 1851 Census, HO 107/1760; 1861 Census, RG 9/1094; England & Wales, Free BMD Death Index: 1837–1915 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.

[6] *Essex Standard* and *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 11 March 1859, both p. 3

[7] Thomas Rowlandson, 'A Sailor's Home', etching from series *Imitations of Modern Drawing* (London, 1787), Metropolitan Museum of Art, credit Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1933 http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/407353 . This illustration is a variant of the Sailor's Return genre, itself part of a wider genre on the Labourer's Return. Usually the homecoming sailor

or worker is pictured at the threshold of the home, rather than in it, as here, reflecting longstanding ambivalence about the relationship between masculinity and domesticity. See Brian Maidment, 'Domestic Ideology and its Industrial Enemies – The Title Pages of The Family Economist 1848-1850' Christopher Parker, *Gender Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Literature* (Abingdon: Scholar Press, 1995), pp.25-56; Trev L. Broughton and Helen Rogers, 'The Empire of the Father', in *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007); and Joanne Begatio (Bailey), *Parenting in England 1760-1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

This entry was posted in Liberated Prisoners, Offending. Bookmark the permalink.

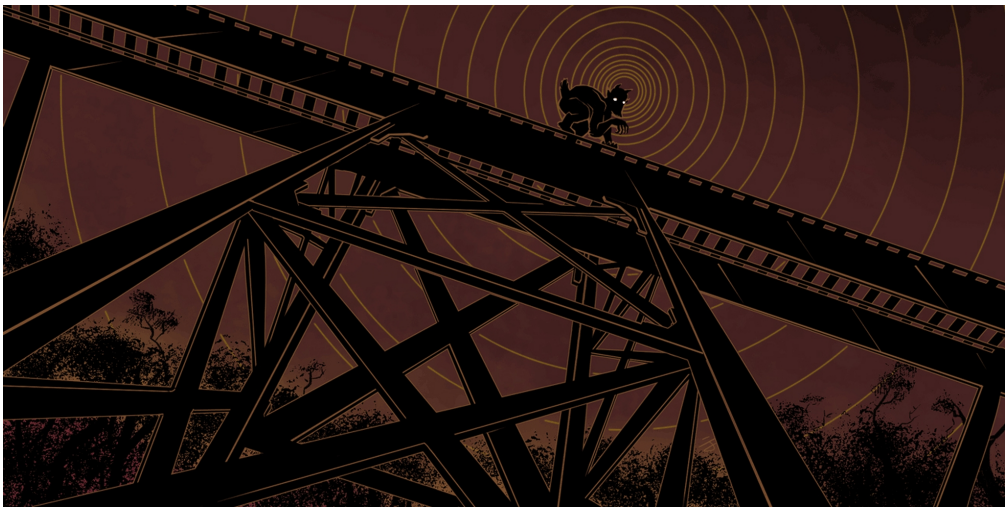
Blog at WordPress.com.

The strange, unexplained, and deadly allure of the Pope Lick Monster dailydot.com

The Daily Dot

Jay Hathaway
2016-05-04 02:30 p.m. | Last updated 2016-05-06 12:22 p.m.
People are dying in search of the legend.

The Daily Dot



Roquel Bain and her boyfriend didn't see the train coming until it was too late. Bain, a 26-year-old surgical assistant from Ohio, had traveled to Louisville, Kentucky for a late-night paranormal tour of a local sanatorium. With hours to spare beforehand, they found themselves on a trestle bridge nearly 100 feet above Pope Lick Creek, investigating the legend of a half-man, half-goat monster who lures humans to their deaths.

Many believe trains no longer run over the infamous Pope Lick bridge, but they do. Norfolk Southern Railway's freight trains pass by several times each day, carrying coal and other cargo, and the railroad has warned monster-chasers to stay away.

So when Bain and her boyfriend made it onto the bridge on a Saturday night, April 23, they may not have known they were in danger. Although they had to contend with an eight-foot-tall security fence, they surely didn't expect to see a train rolling toward them at 32 miles per hour.



Google Maps

According to numerous sources about the urban legend, the Pope Lick bridge is 772 feet long and 90 feet high. People have committed suicide by jumping from it, and outrunning a train to the other side is nearly impossible.

The only means of escape, as depicted in *The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster,* a black-and-white 1988 short by local filmmaker Ron Schildknecht, is to hang off the side of the bridge while the train passes—a feat that requires tremendous strength and stamina.



The Legend of the Pope Lick Monster (1988)

It's not clear whether the young couple had seen the movie, but they tried the same thing. Roquel Bain's boyfriend managed to hold on. He climbed back on top of the trestle and was later rescued by the fire department, according to the *Louisville Courier-Journal.*

But Bain wasn't as quick. Struck by the train, she fell between 80 and 90 feet to the street below and was pronounced dead around 8pm.

Jeffersontown deputy coroner Jack Arnold told the *Courier-Journal* that, although he's investigated deaths at the bridge before, Bain was officially the first to die chasing the Pope Lick Monster.

Unofficially, the monster has claimed many more victims. According to local legend, memorialized in John E. Kleber's *Encyclopedia of Louisville,* the beast uses hypnosis to draw its victims onto the train tracks. Stupefied, they're unable to move until they're roused by the sound and vibration of an oncoming locomotive.

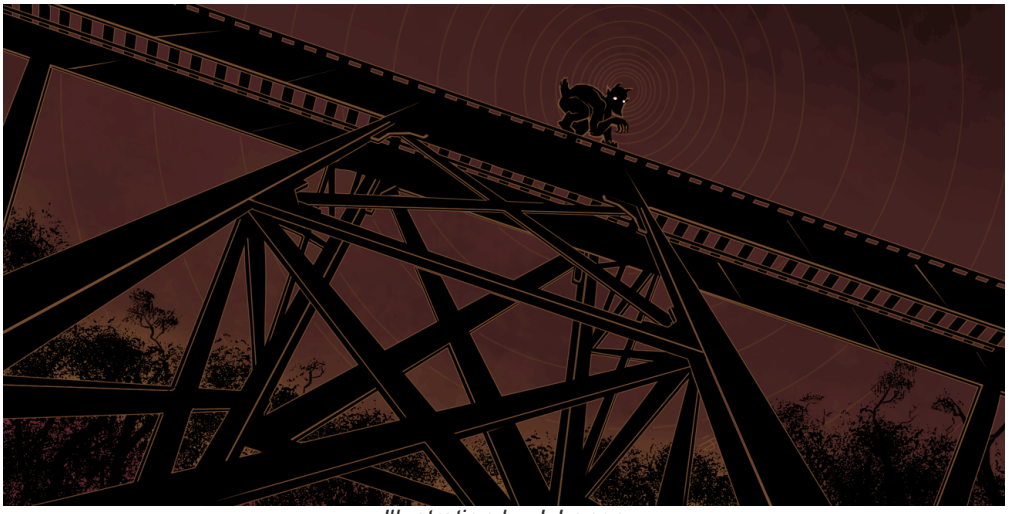


Illustration by J. Longo

The monster has existed as a local Louisville legend since at least the 1960s. Accounts of its origins conflict, but two narratives dominate. In one version, the monster is a lonely circus freak, an escapee from a derailed train who's now bent on revenge against mankind. In another, it was farmer who gained supernatural powers—and a misshapen form—after sacrificing his goats to Satan.

Sometimes it's described as part goat, and elsewhere as a goat-sheep hybrid. According to one cryptozoological website, it has a curved nose and "short, sharp horns... nestled in long, greasy hair." Fur covers its muscular legs.

It's been said to hypnotize with a stare, or lure people by mimicking familiar voices. And it also carries a bloody axe, because that's how these things tend to work. Some suggest it also travels with a pack of wild goats.

In certain versions of the story, the sight of the monster is so terrifying that it drives victims to jump to their deaths. In other versions, the monster's hypnosis keeps its prey on the bridge until a train arrives to finish them off.

There have been no confirmed sightings of the monster and no deaths attributed to it. But that hasn't stopped the monster—or the myth of its existence—from claiming victims.

Climbing the "haunted" Pope Lick Bridge is a dare for bored, thrill-seeking local teens, and it's a tradition for high school senior boys. Thus far, at least three of them have died in the attempt.

Paranormal author J. Nathan Couch, who visited the bridge in 2013, writes that there were two deaths resulting from daredevil antics on the bridge in 1987, just months apart:

> Jack “J.C.” Charles Bahm II, a 17-year old Spalding University student, was struck and killed by a train February 18, 1987 while crossing the trestle. He has since been eulogized at the site of his death. “JC we love and miss you” is spray painted on the trestle’s base. In May 1987, 19-year-old David Wayne Bryant died of injuries obtained in 1986 when he jumped from the trestle to dodge an oncoming locomotive.

Then, in '88, Schildknect's film about the monster arrived and changed everything. He took a legend that had circulated in the Louisville Area for generations—the trestle was built in 1929—and codified it in media for the first time.

“What interested me were the stories people told when they went out to the trestle and the kind of things that happened to them,” Schildknecht told the *College Heights Herald*. “Things like kids going on out there banging their hands on the hoods of their cars, scaring their girlfriends, going out there chanting Pope Lick, Pope Lick.”

The stories were mostly harmless fun, a good scare. But Schildknecht was just weeks into filming *Legend of the Pope Lick Monster* when J.C. Bahm fell from the bridge.

The deaths that year, combined with the hype around the local film, drew the attention of Norfolk Southern, the large national railroad that moves freight across the bridge. Signs were posted and a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire was erected.

An audio warning about the dangers of the tracks, provided by the railroad, played before showings of the film, according to the *Herald.* In spite of—or perhaps because of—the warning campaign, the allure of the Pope Lick Bridge and its monster persisted. On the night of the movie's premiere, two boys were stopped by police trying to make it to the bridge, Couch wrote.

Then, in 2000, 19-year-old Nicholas Jewell fell to his death trying to hang off the trestle until a train passed.

That was the last death until Roquel Bain's. In the intervening time, the Internet happened in a huge way, transforming former local legends into national tourist attractions. What used to be a scary story passed down through generations of Louisville teens is now a well-documented online phenomenon.

There's an article about the monster on Atlas Obscura, the Internet's catalog of strange and fascinating locations. It's covered in cryptozoological wikis, on "legend tripping" websites, and on Wikipedia itself. And now, with Bain's death, it's international tabloid news.

Between the Pope Lick Monster and the famous haunted Waverly Hills sanatorium, Louisville is something of a hot spot for paranormal enthusiasts. Couch came from Wisconsin to see the bridge; Bain and her boyfriend came from Dayton, Ohio.

The rise of Instagram and selfie culture have also helped to breathe new life into the old Pope Lick Trestle dare, for both locals and tourists.

The Visit Louisville Instagram account even posted this photo a few months ago, telling potential tourists, "if you haven't climbed on the Pope Lick Train Trestle, you haven't lived!" In retrospect, probably not the safest message to send.

> If you haven't climbed on the Pope Lick Train Trestle you haven't lived. Great shot by @stevegrider! Thanks for tagging #visitlouisville!
>
> A photo posted by Visit Louisville (@visitlouisville) on Feb 15, 2016 at 7:42am PST

The most fascinating thing about the Pope Lick Monster in 2016 is that it might signal a trend of urban legends getting a second life online. There have always been local tales like the Pope Lick, or even fairly universal ones—remember Bloody Mary?—but creepypasta is a new phenomenon straight out of Internet message boards.

There's a pile of interesting, original horror fiction emerging on Reddit and 4chan, but sometimes the audience can take things too far. Climbing a railroad trestle seems like a mild risk compared to taking lives in the name of the Internet monster Slenderman, as two tween girls allegedly attempted to do in 2014. Earlier this year, a Wisconsin judge opted to try them as adults.

It's hard to argue that fantastic, terrible stories like the Pope Lick Monster are to blame for the dangerous choices people make, but as the distinction between "online" and "real life" continues to break down, more of these fictional horrors will find expression beyond the local high schools and 4chan boards where they were born.

After all, nothing goes viral like an urban legend.

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The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Grey Wolf

ancient-origins.net

16 October, 2016 - 21:59 Kerry Sullivan

Ancient Origins



The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Grey Wolf

Ivan Tsarevich is a placeholder of sorts for the male protagonist of many famous Russian folk, myths and legends (Ivan is one of the most common names in Russia). Sometimes Ivan is the son of a peasant, sometimes he is the son of a tsar, ("tsarevich" means "tsar's son") but he is just about always the youngest of three sons. While his two older brothers fail due to ineptitude or maleficence, Ivan always succeeds in his task. Many folktales relate encounters Ivan has had with mythical creatures- both good and evil. One of his most famous quests is called The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Grey Wolf.

Legend has it Tsar Vislav had a wonderful orchard of which he was very proud. One morning while walking among his apple trees, the Tsar realized that someone had been sneaking into the orchard and stealing his apples. Enraged, the Tsar ordered guards to patrol the orchard, however, they could not catch the culprit who continued to steal more and more apples every night. The Tsar began to grow despondent.

> *"Dear Father, don't grieve, we ourselves will guard the garden," said his three sons. That night the oldest son, Dmitry, stood guard but by midnight had fallen asleep. The next morning the Tsar asked, "Well, did you see the culprit?" "No, Father," said Dmitry. "All night I didn't sleep, my eyes never closed, but I didn't see anything."*

The next night the middle son, Vasiliy, stood guard in the orchard but by midnight he too had fallen asleep. The next morning the Tsar asked, "Well, did you see the culprit?" "No, Father," said Vasiliy. "All night I didn't sleep, my eyes never closed, but I didn't see anything."

The third night it was the turn of the youngest son, Ivan, to stand guard in the orchard. The hours passed slowly by and Ivan grew very sleepy. Yet, he knew how important his job was so he took drops of dew from the grass and wiped the sleep from his eyes. Shortly after midnight, the Firebird came into the orchard. "Suddenly the whole orchard lit up as if a thousand lights were shining on it" (Polenov, 2016).

The Firebird landed softly on the bough of the apple tree and began to eat away at the fruit. Ivan ran to catch hold of its tail but it took flight, leaving only one precious tail feather in Ivan's hand. The next morning the Tsar asked, "Well, did you see the culprit?" "Dear Father," said Ivan. "I have discovered who destroys our garden. Here is a memento from the culprit for you to take. It is, Dear Father, the Firebird."



Ivan catching the Firebird's feather.

Ivan catching the Firebird's feather. (Public Domain)

The rest of the legend (which is very entertaining and can be found following the links at the end of this article) relates how Ivan and his brothers attempt to capture the magnificent Firebird. Needless to say, Dmitry and Vasiliy are unsuccessful in their attempts. Ivan, meanwhile, wins the sympathy of the Grey Wolf, who helps the boy complete his quest. Ivan eventually returns to his father with not only the Firebird but also its golden cage, a horse with a golden mane and its bridle set with precious stones, and the fairest princess in the land, Elena Prekracnaya. While riding here and there on the back of the Grey Wolf, Ivan and Elena fall in love and, after a few close calls, live happily ever after together at the end of the story.

The Tale of Ivan Tsarevich, the Firebird, and the Grey Wolf contains several key elements found in other ancient myths including the Irish fairytale "The Greek Princess and the Young Gardener," the Swedish fairytale "The Bird 'Grip,'" and the Swahili fairy tale "The Nunda, Eater of People." All of these stories are classified type 550 "quest for the golden bird/ firebird" in the Aarne–Thompson classification system (an index used to organize and analyze different narratives). Firebirds are mythical creatures that come from faraway lands and can bring either blessings or curses upon those with whom it comes into contact. In Ivan Tsarevich's case, the Firebird brought good fortune.



Ivan Tsarevich riding the Gray Wolf by Viktor Vasnetsov, 1889.

Ivan Tsarevich riding the Gray Wolf by Viktor Vasnetsov, 1889. (Public Domain)

Firebirds are often depicted as looking similar to peacocks except instead of blue and green plumage, the Firebird's feathers are bright red, orange, and yellow, like a bonfire or a turbulent flame. The majestic bird appears to glow in the dark and in some stories its feathers continue to shed light even when removed from the bird. Most Firebird quests involve the protagonist being sent off in search of the mythical creature after a father or ruler sees a single feather. The father or ruler is covetous and wants to possess the bird to enhance their standing and/or fortunes but the hero takes up the quest for nobler reasons, such as duty, adventure, or curiosity. The journey to the Firebird is difficult and more often than not, the hero is assisted by a magical helper, usually another animal. In the story of Ivan Tsarevich, he is aided by the Grey Wolf.

Wolves are more ambiguous than Firebirds in mythology. Sometimes they are good, like the Greco-Roman wolf that nurtures Romulus and Remus; sometimes they are bad, as in the Zoroastrian tradition where wolves are the creation of wicked Ahriman. The wolves of Slavic myths seem to embrace this ambiguity; they can be good or bad but they are always noble and fearless.

Top image: Ivan Tsarevich and the Firebird on a magic carpet. (Public Domain)

By Kerry Sullivan

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The tale of the Gawgaw

timesofmalta.com

Wednesday, December 3, 2008, 11:58 by

Jennifer Mifsud

The majority of the youngsters probably never heard of it, but in older days, December 24 - that is, Christmas Eve - was a big no-no day to be born on. I had never heard of it, until one day several years ago, my father gave me a book titled *Rigal tal-Milied,* which is authored by Trevor Zahra. I remember that in this book, there was a very sweet story about the *Gawgaw* tale.

According to a superstitious belief which our fathers had, a person born on December 24 was very unlucky since, year after year, this person would be transformed in a *Gawgaw* on the night between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

This *Gawgaw*, according to the tale, was nothing more than a disfigured monstrous ghost that used to go round the streets frightening people throughout the night. The transformed person would only return to a normal human being on Christmas morning, however, the person would be totally exhausted and all bruised.

This transformation was said to be God's punishment towards that person for being brazen enough to choose to be born the night His son was born.

The only way a person could avoid being transformed into a *Gawgaw* was to stay up all night and count the holes in a sieve from 11 p.m. Christmas Eve until Christmas morning.

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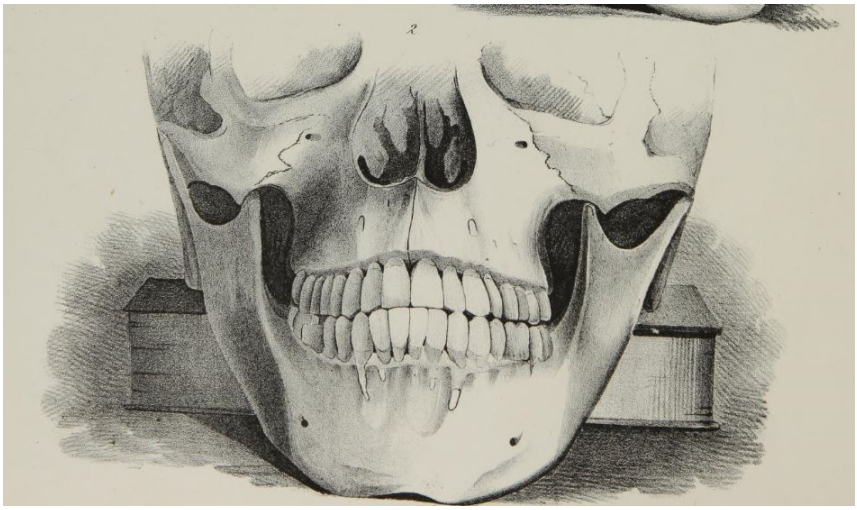
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The Tooth-Snatcher - Haunted Ohio Books

hauntedohiobooks.com

This is the official website of the 7-volume Haunted Ohio series and the Ghosts of the Past series by Ohio author Chris Woodyard
Phone (937) 426-5110 • **Fax** (937) 320 - 1832
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The Tooth-Snatcher



The Tooth-Snatcher. A perfect set of teeth waiting for the Tooth-snatchers.

Since we are nothing if not topical here, I excuse this slight supernatural story involving tooth-snatching on the grounds of enfeeblement from a recent root canal. Ouch.

"The Rev. Mr. Perring, Vicar of a parish which is now a component part of London, though, about forty-five years ago it had the appearance of a village at the outskirts, had to encounter the sad affliction of losing his eldest Son at an age when parents are encouraged to believe their children are to become their survivors; the youth dying in his seventeenth year. He was buried in the vaults of the church.

"Two nights subsequently to that interment, the father dreamed that he saw his Son habited in a shroud spotted with blood, the expression of his countenance being that of a person enduring some paroxysm of acute pain: 'Father, father! come and defend me!' were the words he distinctly heard, as he gazed on this awe-inspiring apparition; 'they will not let me rest quiet in my coffin.'

"The venerable man awoke with terror and trembling; but after a brief interval of painful reflection concluded himself to be labouring under the influence of his sad day-thoughts, and the depression of past sufferings; and with these rational assurances commended himself to the All-Merciful, and slumbered again and slept.

"He saw his Son again beseeching him to protect his remains from outrage, 'For,' said the apparently surviving dead one, 'they are mangling my body at this moment.' The unhappy Father rose at once, being now unable to banish the fearful image from his mind, and determined when day should dawn to satisfy himself of the delusiveness or verity of the revelation conveyed through this seeming voice from the grave.

"At an early hour, accordingly, he repaired to the Clerk's house, where the keys of the church and of the vaults were kept. The Clerk after considerable delay, came down-stairs, saying it was very unfortunate he should want them just on that very day, as his son over the way had taken them to the smith's for repair,—one of the largest of the bunch of keys having been broken off short in the main door of the vault, so as to render it impracticable for anybody to enter till the lock had been picked and taken off.

> “Impelled by the worst misgivings, the Vicar loudly insisted on the Clerk’s accompanying him to the blacksmith’s—not for a key but for a crowbar, it being his resolute determination to enter the vault and see his Son’s coffin without a moment’s delay.
>
> “The recollections of the dream were now becoming more and more vivid, and the scrutiny about to be made assumed a solemnity mingled with awe, which the agitation of the father rendered terrible to the agents in this forcible interruption into the resting-place of the dead. But the hinges were speedily wrenched asunder—the bar and bolts were beaten in and bent beneath the heavy hammer of the smith,—and at length with tottering and outstretched hands, the maddened parent stumbled and fell: his son’s coffin had been lifted from the recess at the vault’s side and deposited on the brick floor; the lid, released from every screw, lay loose at top, and the body, enveloped in its shroud, on which were several dark spots below the chin, lay exposed to view; the head had been raised, the broad riband had been removed from under the jaw, which now hung down with the most ghastly horror of expression, as if to tell with more terrific certainty the truth of the preceding night’s vision. *Every tooth in the head had been drawn.*
>
> *“*The young man had when living a beautiful set of sound teeth. The Clerk’s Son, who was a barber, cupper, and dentist, had possessed himself of the keys, and eventually of the teeth, for the purpose of profitable employment of so excellent a set in his line of business. The feelings of the Rev. Mr. Perring can be easily conceived. The event affected his mind through the remaining term of his existence; but what became of the delinquent whose sacrilegious hand had thus rifled the tomb was never afterwards correctly ascertained. He decamped the same day, and was supposed to have enlisted as a soldier. The Clerk was ignominiously displaced, and did not long survive the transaction. Some years afterwards, his house was pulled down to afford room for extensive improvements and new buildings in the village.
>
> “As regards the occurrence itself, few persons were apprised of it; as the Vicar—shunning public talk and excitement on the subject of any member of his family—exerted himself in concealing the circumstances as much as possible. The above facts, however, may be strictly relied on as accurate.”
>
> *Glimpses of the Supernatural*, Frederick George Lee, 1875

Editor’s note: A friend who provided the above example writes to the Editor:—”I knew the family, and the circumstance of Mr. Perring’s singular dream; and can certainly testify to its truth.”

A minor point, but while this was published in Spiritualist journals and Lee’s book, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the language suggests eighteenth century.

While the body-snatchers’ primary goal was corpses for the anatomist market, teeth were also prized merchandise. Dentures were frequently made from post-mortem pearly-whites, also known today as “Waterloo teeth,” after the wholesale tooth-snatching that occurred after that battle. This article tells the history of the practice, which did not begin with Waterloo, and suggests that many people did not realize the source of their false teeth.

Ben Crouch, described in the following squib, was said to be the leader of “the most expert gang of resurrectionists ever known.” He specialized in corpse teeth, and even got the proper credentials to facilitate his dental acquisitions.

> [Crouch] was a big, powerful man, quite famous as a prize-fighter. His father was employed as a carpenter at Guy's Hospital, which probably explains the way in which he first became attracted to resurrectioning… In 1817 he and Jack Harnett, another of the gang, gave up resurrectioning and began the business of supplying dentists with human teeth. They got sutlers' licenses and followed the English army to France and Spain. After a battle they would get as many teeth as possible from the dead, likewise stealing any money or valuables that might be found on the corpses. *The Medical News*, Vol. 81, 1902

Other toothsome Spiritualist tales? Send with a warm salt-water rinse to chriswoodyard8 AT gmail.com

In other supernatural teeth news, I posted previously on a woman bitten by a demon after some table-tipping experiments.

Posted by
Chris Woodyard
on March 3, 2016 in Body Snatching, Crime, Death, Ghosts, Grim and Grewsome, News, Victorian and tagged bodysnatchers, bodysnatching, corpse teeth, dead man's teeth, dead men's teeth, ghosts, The Tooth-Snatcher, tooth snatchers

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The Worst Ghosts of the Southwest

atlasobscura.com

by Kristin Winet
October 31, 2014

If Halloween is the time of year for frightening tales of apparitions, night monsters, tombs, and vampires, these hauntingly normal ghosts of the Southwest dispel the myth that the supernatural beings are always out to haunt us. Sometimes, they are just doing what they do best — being themselves. Here are five tales of the odd and unpredictable way that some ghosts are reported to hang out in the afterlife.

Miss Julia Lowell: The scorned prostitute who can't stop working
Copper Queen Hotel, Bisbee, Arizona

The demise of Miss Julia at Arizona's Copper Queen Hotel is much like the demise of many a scorned woman. One night, she serviced a new client, fell madly in love, wanted to marry, and, after he revealed that she wasn't marriage material, decided to kill herself. While one might think that this Miss who never became a Mrs. would be freed from the shackles of her job, nearly a hundred years of sightings logged in the book at the reception confirm that she's more active than ever.

Our scorned prostitute, as flirtatious and alluring as always, only appears to men in scantily-clad attire and dances seductive stripteases at the foot of their beds. Sometimes she whispers in their ear, sometimes she appears with a bottle of liquor in her hand, and sometimes she flits around the hotel, tapping only on the doors of male guests. Poor, poor Julia — never a vacation day for this lady of the night.

Mr. Thomas James Wright: The poker player who's stuck in his room
Room 18, St. James Hotel, New Mexico

The St. James Hotel is no stranger to supernatural sightings and is reputably swarming with ghosts. Perhaps the most unusual is Mr. Thomas James Wright, an ill-tempered poker winner who was shot from behind after he won the rights to the hotel in a tense poker match. His murder was grizzly: he slowly bled to death, right outside of his room.

As you can imagine, he is not a happy ghost, and before the staff permanently locked his room, he would haunt people by pushing them down in the hallway or turning into a ball of angry-looking orange light above their heads. Today, though, the room is still locked (but the staff have kindly decorated it with a coat rack, a rocking chair, paraphernalia from the Old West, a bottle of Jack Daniels, and a poster of a half-naked woman), so while he can't really do much haunting these days because he apparently can't get out of the room, he can still be heard bumbling around, grumbling, and refusing company.

Kate Morgan: The lovely young lady who likes to shop and watch TV
Hotel del Coronado, California

Kate, reputedly a "beautiful young woman," checked into California's famous Hotel del Coronado in 1892 and waited for her lover for four days. He didn't show up. In what was determined a suicide, she was found dead on the exterior steps of the hotel leading towards the beach after realizing that her lover would never come.

She's supposedly been at the Coronado ever since. But there's no need to worry: as in life, this charming, youthful, innocent young lady is totally harmless in the afterlife. She's said to like hanging out in her former room, playing silly pranks on guests, watching TV (it often turns on and off by itself), walking along the beach, and shopping in the gift shop.

Pancho Villa: The revolutionary still looking for his head
Gadsden Hotel, Arizona

Pancho Villa, the famous revolutionary, former governor of Chihuahua, Mexico, and commander in the Mexican Revolution, has a much less decorated existence these days. As the story goes, after he was assassinated, loyalists cut off Villa's head and buried it at the site of the burned-down Gadsden Hotel in Arizona. He had visited on horseback years before, and his horse had chipped a stair on the staircase (the chip is still there).

When the hotel was rebuilt in the early 20th century, people started seeing apparitions of a tall headless man in an army suit. Believed to be Pancho Villa's ghost, the apparition now haunts the basement and hallways looking for his lost head. How anyone knows the identity of a headless man in an army suit is beyond us, but, well, that's the way the story goes.

Stray Cat: The hungry feline who won't leave the kitchen staff alone
Oliver House, Bisbee, Arizona

What would a round-up of worst ghosts be without a ghost cat? According to crime reports, 27 people have died in this popular B&B in Bisbee, Arizona, since it was built in the early 20th century and it is supposedly haunted by seemingly everyone — but the ghost who sleeps outdoors and eats rodents is perhaps the most interesting.

The stray cat who lived outside the house for many years and was fed by the kitchen staff still roams the property, begging for food, sleeping in the sun, meowing, doing what felines do best, except while dead.

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There is no such thing as the Denver Guardian, despite that Facebook post you saw

denverpost.com

There is no such thing as the Denver Guardian, despite that Facebook post you saw

Anti-Hillary Clinton "story" is the latest in a wave of fake partisan news flooding Facebook

By Eric Lubbers | elubbers@denverpost.com
PUBLISHED: November 5, 2016 at 6:08 pm | UPDATED: November 6, 2016 at 10:33 am

The "Denver Guardian" is not a real news source and definitely isn't Denver's oldest news source.

On Nov. 5, a story began circulating on Facebook (at points gaining 100 shares per minute) with the headline "FBI AGENT SUSPECTED IN HILLARY EMAIL LEAKS FOUND DEAD IN APPARENT MURDER-SUICIDE," and hosted at denverguardian.com.

The only problem is that there is no such thing as "The Denver Guardian" and the news story it "reported" never happened.

Let's run down the list of red flags:

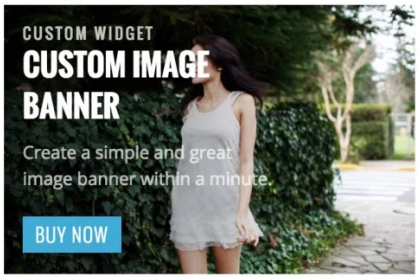
- The domain denverguardian.com was first registered in July 2016 and is hosted by GoDaddy.
- This story is the only story showing up under the "News" section and all other sections are turning up errors.
- There is no Walkerville, Maryland. There *is* a Walker**s**ville, Maryland, but the city does not have a police department, making the quote from "Walkerville Police Chief Pat Frederick" null and void.
- The address listed for the newsroom is a tree in a parking lot next to a vacant bank building on Colfax.

- Half of the modules on the site itsself are unfinished (see screenshot).
- The site looks suspiciously like "The Baltimore Gazette," another fake news site that The Baltimore City Paper called out in September for sharing a false news story about police violence and breastfeeding.
- The story references a local TV news staion, WHAG-TV, whose website has no coverage of a murder-suicide house fire whatsoever.
- The image used to illustrate the story was taken by Flickr user Adam Belles in 2010 of his neighbor's house on fire.

This false story is one of thousands of fake news stories being circulated around Facebook by fly-by-night "hyperpartisan" sites this election cycle, according an investigation by Buzzfeed News.

A second investigation showed that many of the sites spreading the fake news have been created by teens in Macedonia looking to profit off of supporters (and detractors) of Donald Trump.

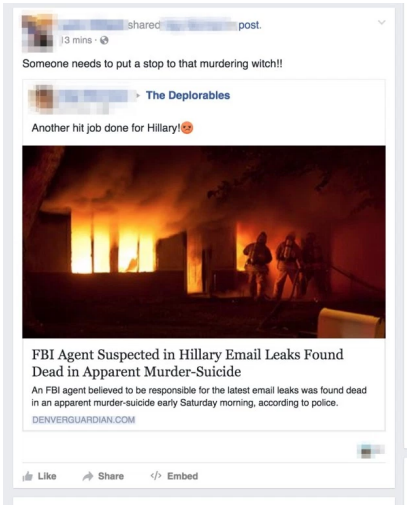
The teens tried to make pages for Bernie Sanders and other left-leaning politicians, but "people in America prefer to read news about Trump," according to one Macedonian 16-year-old.



CUSTOM WIDGET
LATEST COMMENTS

On Nov. 6, Vox posted a story tackling the expected long-term damage this flood of fake news on Facebook could have on democracy and what they say is the social media giant's responsibility to tackle, sooner than later.

This story was sent to us by a tipster. Got a tip for us? Submit it here: http://www.denverpost.com/news-tips/



Updated Nov. 6, 2016 at 10:20 a.m. to provide additional detail.

Eric Lubbers

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'They're not human': How 19th-century Inuit coped with a real-life invasion of the 'walking dead'

nationalpost.com

NATIONAL POST Tristin Hopper
Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016

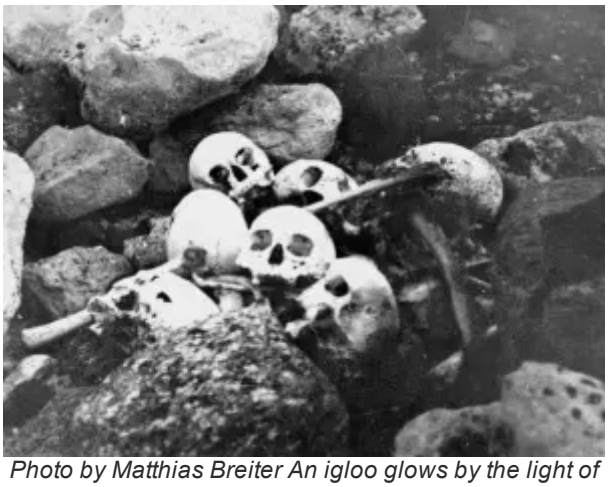


Photo by Matthias Breiter An igloo glows by the light of a seal oil lamp under the Northern lights. Public domain The 1864 British painting Man Proposes, God Disposes, by Edwin Landseer, which is said to be inspired by the lost Franklin Expedition. Hulton Archive/Getty Images From a painting by W Turner Smith depicting Franklin Expedition members attempting to leave the Arctic on foot. Owen Beattie/University of Alberta This color photo shows the preserved body of John Torrington, a petty officer on the Franklin Arctic expedition who died in the spring of 1846. Scientist exhumed the body from its rock-piled grave in the permafrost of Beechey Island in the early 1980s. National Maritime Museum Undated handout photo of Sir John Franklin, Arctic Explorer

A 1945 photo of skulls, bleached white by the sun, discovered around King William Island in what is now Nunavut. National Archives of Canada

It was easily one of the most unearthly and chilling visions that had ever struck the land that would soon become Canada.

Eight or nine lurching figures: Their eyes vacant, their skin blue, unable to talk and barely alive.

It was sometime before 1850 at a remote Arctic hunting camp near the southwest edge of King William Island, an Arctic island 1,300 km northwest of what is now Iqaluit, Nunavut. And these "beings" had seemingly materialized out of nowhere.

"They're not Inuit; they're not human," was how a woman, badly shaking with fright, first reported their arrival to the assembled camp.



Photo by Matthias Breiter An igloo glows by the light of a seal oil lamp under the Northern lights.

They were all gathered in an igloo. The men of the camp were away seal hunting, leaving only the women, children and one old man.

As the group tried to process the terrifying reality of what they'd just heard, the crunching footsteps of the strangers got closer.

"Everyone got scared. Very, very scared," was how the Gjoa Haven shaman Nicholas Qayutinuaq described the encounter to historian Dorothy Eber in 1999. The story was included in Eber's 2008

book Encounters on the Passage.

These Inuit were among the most isolated people on earth. Although they knew of Europeans, they had never met a white person. They had never even met Dene.



Public domain The 1864 British painting Man Proposes, God Disposes, by Edwin Landseer, which is said to be inspired by the lost Franklin Expedition.

Finally, as the footsteps stopped just outside the igloo, it was the old man who went out to investigate.

He emerged to see a disoriented figure seemingly unaware of his presence. The being was touching the outside of the igloo with curiosity, and raised no protest when the old man reached his hand out to touch its cheek.

His skin was cold.

"I've never in all my life seen a devil or a spirit, these things are not human," is how Inuit oral history records the old man's first thoughts.

The figures, of course, were the last survivors of the Franklin Expedition. They had buried their captain. They had seen their ship entombed by ice. They had eaten the dead to survive.

And now, they were 5,000 km from home, in the last days of a futile bid to escape the Canadian Arctic on foot.

When the Inuit saw them off King William Island, the men were still hundreds of kilometres from any fur trading post or whaling station that could possibly mount a rescue.

Historian Dorothy Eber called these scenes "the death marches."



A renowned chronicler of Inuit culture, Eber spent decades travelling the north and collecting Inuit oral history. Her 1970 book, Pitseolak: Pictures Out of My Life, is credited as the first book to be published in Inuktitut after the Bible.

In the 1990s, Eber turned her sights on getting the Inuit perspective on the age of Arctic exploration. What emerged was a cornucopia of stories detailing ghostly encounters with

Hulton Archive/Getty Images From a painting by W Turner Smith depicting Franklin Expedition members attempting to leave the Arctic on foot.

doomed men.



Owen Beattie/University of Alberta This color photo shows the preserved body of John Torrington, a petty officer on the Franklin Arctic expedition who died in the spring of 1846. Scientist exhumed the body from its rock-piled grave in the permafrost of Beechey Island in the early 1980s.

Indigenous groups across the Americas had all encountered Europeans differently. But where other coastal groups such as the Haida or the Mi'kmaq had met white men who were well-fed and well-dressed, the Inuit frequently encountered their future colonizers as small parties on the edge of death.

"I'm sure it terrified people," said Eber, 91, speaking to the National Post by phone from her Toronto home.

And it's why, as many as six generations after the events of the Franklin Expedition, Eber was meeting Inuit still raised on stories of the two giant ships that came to the Arctic and discharged columns of death onto the ice.

Inuit nomads had come across streams of men that "didn't seem to be right." Maddened by scurvy, botulism or desperation, they were raving in a language the Inuit couldn't understand. In one case, hunters came across two Franklin Expedition survivors who had been sleeping for days in the hollowed-out corpses of seals.

"They were unrecognizable they were so dirty," Lena Kingmiatook, a resident of Taloyoak, told Eber.

Mark Tootiak, a stepson of Nicholas Qayutinuaq, related a story to Eber of a group of Inuit who had an early encounter with a small and "hairy" group of Franklin Expedition men evacuating south.

"Later … these Inuit heard that people had seen more white people, a lot more white people, dying," he said. "They were seen carrying human meat."

Even Eber's translator, the late Tommy Anguttitauruq, recounted a goose hunting trip in which he had stumbled upon a Franklin Expedition skeleton still carrying a clay pipe.

By 1850, coves and beaches around King William Island were littered with the disturbing remnants of their advance: Scraps of clothing and camps still littered with their dead occupants. Decades later, researchers would confirm the Inuit accounts of cannibalism when they found bleached human bones with their flesh hacked clean.

"I've never in all my life seen any kind of spirit — I've heard the sounds they make, but I've never seen them with my own eyes," said the old man who had gone out to investigate the Franklin survivors who had straggled into his camp that day on King William Island.

The figures' skin was cold but it was not "cold as a fish," concluded the man. Therefore, he reasoned, they were probably alive.

"They were beings but not Inuit," he said, according to the account by shaman Nicholas Qayutinuaq.

The figures were too weak to be dangerous, so Inuit women tried to comfort the strangers by inviting them into their igloo.

But close contact only increased their alienness: The men were timid, untalkative and — despite their obvious starvation — they refused to eat.

The men spit out pieces of cooked seal offered to them. They rejected offers of soup. They grabbed jealous hold of their belongings when the Inuit offered to trade.

When the Inuit men returned to the camp from their hunt, they constructed an igloo for the strangers, built them a fire and even outfitted the shelter with three whole seals.

Then, after the white men had gone to sleep, the Inuit quickly packed up their belongings and fled by moonlight.

Whether the pale-skinned visitors were qallunaat or "Indians" — the group determined that staying too long around these "strange people" with iron knives could get them all killed.



National Maritime Museum
Undated handout photo of Sir John Franklin, Arctic Explorer

"That night they got all their belongings together and took off towards the southwest," Qayutinuaq told Dorothy Eber.

But the true horror of the encounter wouldn't be revealed until several months later.

The Inuit had left in such a hurry that they had abandoned several belongings. When a small party went back to the camp to retrieve them, they found an igloo filled with corpses.

The seals were untouched. Instead, the men had eaten each other.

It would cause a scandal in the U.K. when the first evidence returned of what had befallen Franklin's men.

Britons had imagined that if the expedition was indeed lost, it had almost certainly met a noble, "British" death.

That would be the case in the Antarctic 60 years later when a party led by Robert Falcon Scott was killed while returning from the South Pole.

Recovery teams found the Scott expedition men frozen to death in their tent alongside flowery letters praising the glory of England.

"After all we are setting a good example to our countrymen, if not by getting into a tight place, by facing it like men when we were there," read Scott's last letter.

But no triumphant letters were recovered from Franklin. Instead, it was the Scottish explorer John Rae who returned with Inuit testimony that the expedition had descended into madness and cannibalism.

No less than Charles Dickens would lead a crusade to discredit Rae, accusing the Scot of trusting "the chatter of a gross handful of uncivilised people, with domesticity of blood and blubber."

But for all Dickens' talk of English superiority, it was these "uncivilised people" who had been on the receiving end of an invasion of wraithlike pale-skinned cannibals.

In 1854, Rae had just come back from a return trip to the Arctic, where he had been horrified to discover that many of his original Inuit sources had fallen to the same fates they had witnessed in the Franklin Expedition.

An outbreak of influenza had swept the area, likely sparked by the wave of Franklin searchers combing the Arctic. As social mores broke down, food ran short.

Inuit men that Rae had known personally had chosen suicide over watching the slow death of their children. Families had starved for days before eating their dog teams. Some women, who had seen their families die around them, had needed to turn to the "last resource" to survive the winter.

"These poor people know too well what starvation is, in its utmost extremes, to be mistaken on such a point," read Rae's icy reply to Charles Dickens.

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Posted in: News Tags: Canada, Arctic, Franklin Expedition, Inuit, Sir John Franklin, Tommy Anguttitauruq

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They're moving west! Creepy clowns spotted in Jefferson County

2016/09/27 msnewsnow.com

They're moving west! Creepy clowns spotted in Jefferson County - MSNewsNow.com - Jackson, MS

JEFFERSON COUNTY, Mo. (KMOV.com) --Days after a string of reports of scary clown sightings in the Metro East, similar reports have popped up in Jefferson County. The two claims that surfaced have not been confirmed by police.

Pevely Police Chief Ron Weeks told News 4 an anonymous caller reported there was a clown with a knife at the Pevely Pointe Apartments. Chief Weeks said an officer was dispatched to check out the claim, but didn't find anyone dressed as a clown.

There was also a claim on social media that a clown was sighted on Tin House Road, southwest of Hillsboro. News 4 contacted the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department which said they have no record of anyone notifying them of a clown sighting in that area.

In the Metro East, Granite City police confirm they've received 10 calls about people dressed as clowns and Wood River police have received two similar calls. However, officers have not been able to verify the claims.

Since late August there have been reports of sinister looking clowns in five other states, which apparently began with reports of clowns trying to lure children into the woods in
Greenville, South Carolina. Greenville officers searched the area but never found any clowns.

According to a report by NPR nine people in clown costumes were arrested in Alabama and one in Kentucky.

There's speculation the clown sightings are part of a viral campaign to promote an upcoming horror movie, but that's unconfirmed.

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Thief steals barrel of gold flakes from armored truck in NYC

BY Rocco Parascandola Ben Kochman

nydailynews.com

BY Rocco Parascandola Ben Kochman
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
Saturday, October 1, 2016, 1:37 AM



(Fairfax Media/Fairfax Media via Getty Images)

A selection of gold bars and gold flakes.A thief somehow made off with a 55-gallon barrel of gold flakes weighing about 86 pounds.

A bandit ran off with over $1 million worth of gold after swiping a barrel from an armored truck in Midtown, police sources said Friday.

The brazen theft went down on W. 48th St. near Fifth Ave. Thursday afternoon, when two guards on a Loomis International truck making a pick-up in the Diamond District noticed that one five-gallon drum of gold flakes – part of a larger shipment headed to Canada – was missing.

The 86-pound tin of precious metals, valued at around $1,565,000, was part of a delivery meant to end up in Ontario with a company called Asahi Refining, sources said.

The truck's surveillance cameras caught a suspect lifting a container and sprinting off east on 48th St, sources said.



(Google Maps Street View)

Asahi Refining at 130 Glidden Road, Brampton, Ontario.

The truck had started its day picking up a load on W. 47th St. near 6th Ave, before making the stop on W. 48th St.

Four 55-gallon pails of silver and four other five-gallon containers of gold were untouched.

Police sources described the suspect as a Hispanic man wearing a black vest over a green shirt, and carrying a black messenger bag.

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Stolen sex symbol - Marilyn goes walkabout

stuff.co.nz

stuff MEGHAN LAWRENCE

Last updated 10:42, October 20 2016



SUPPLIED A much-loved statue of late American film actress Marilyn Monroe has been stolen from a Farm Cove home in East Auckland.

Farm Cove's iconic mascot has gone walkabout.

A six-foot tall (1.82m) statue of Marilyn Monroe was taken from a Fisher Parade residence in East Auckland on the night of October 13.

The owners are appealing for any information on her whereabouts.

Maria Ross says the statue is part of a collection of rock n' roll and pop-culture memorabilia that decorates her home.

"I love anything rock n' roll. I used to own the halloween house in Fratley Avenue, so I have always done my house up to a theme.

"The last two houses have been rock n' roll, with disco balls, tin signs and a jukebox."

Ross purchased the statue of Marilyn Monroe a year ago, after she had been looking to add the American actress to her collection for a number of years.

She has stood in the front garden ever since, for passersby to bask in her glory.

"She was loved and admired by all. Some more than others," she says.

"People who drive past will stop and take photos with her. It's so cool because you get to know the neighbourhood. She is just famous in Farm Cove."

Ross says she's "really gutted" that the statue was stolen, but there would be no questions asked if she was returned.

"I do believe someone is going to see her. There is not a lot of them in New Zealand. I think there is only one other, so it will stand out like a sore thumb.

"It would just be so awesome if she was returned."

Marilyn's disappearance has been reported to police as well as notices placed on social media.

One Neighbourly commenter writes: "What a great shame. Clearly a planned operation. Nothing is safe these days. It is so iconic. I cannot believe it. Somebody somewhere will spot it. Particularly if it has not gone far. Burglars rarely move too far from their home area."

A concerned Farm Cove resident also wrote: "Oh no! I see that driving to work every morning and it's so lovely. It's a great shame it's gone on a wander."

People with any information on the statue's whereabouts can phone Maria Ross on 021 775 656 or email rossfamily@vodafone.co.nz.

- Stuff

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This ‘Conservative News Site’ Trended on Facebook, Showed Up on Fox News—and Duped the World

201610280515

thedailybeast.com



161027-collins-fake-conservative-tease

Photo Illustration by Sarah Rogers/The Daily Beast

This ‘Conservative News Site’ Trended on Facebook, Showed Up on Fox News—and Duped the World

How do Marco Chacon’s fake articles and ‘leaked memos’—which parody the craziest alt-right conspiracies—keep fooling the conservative press and Trump’s followers?



Ben Collins

10.27.16 10:15 PM ET

Marco Chacon had only spent about $20 on his conservative news website, RealTrueNews, when he heard his words in prime time on Fox News’ *The Kelly File.*

“Yeah,” Chacon said. “That was an accident.”

Just as he’d done for the last few months, Chacon had read the latest explosive conservative news—this time it was Hillary Clinton’s leaked speeches to Wall Street banks—and typed up an imagined transcript of his own.

“So in the transcript, she’s explaining Bronies to the Goldman Sachs board of directors,” said Chacon. “Do you know what Bronies are?”

Bronies are hard-core, usually adult fans of the cartoon *My Little Pony*.

“In this one, [Bronies] are part of a threat of subalterns who are going to take over the election. And people believe all this,” he said. “And I’m just… I’m telling people, ‘How can you believe this!?’”

Somewhere in the middle of that block of text about *My Little Pony*, Chacon’s transcript contained the phrase “bucket of losers,” attributed, falsely of course, to Clinton, which legitimate conservative news websites picked up as real.

Sure enough, by 9 p.m. that day, Trace Gallagher was on Fox News telling viewers that Clinton had “apparently called Bernie Sanders supporters a ‘bucket of losers.’” (Megyn Kelly later apologized after the Clinton campaign vehemently denied Clinton said it.)

Taking official-looking documents at face value isn’t just burgeoning among alt-right media. It’s a tactic now endorsed by the Republican candidate for president.

Two weeks ago, GOP nominee Donald Trump implored supporters in a speech in Colorado Springs to “forget the press. Read the internet.”

The internet is filled with verifiable information from journalists at places like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, who face real consequences if a story turns out wrong. But, especially this election cycle, the web is equally saturated with factually inaccurate disinformation, verified by no one, turning up on Facebook and Twitter feeds across all demographics and party lines with no way to stop it.

An analysis conducted by BuzzFeed last week found that Facebook posts from 38 percent of right-wing and 20 percent of left-wing news sites “published false or misleading information.”

Chacon, a 47-year-old veteran infantryman, father, bank executive, and moderate Republican, saw it all over his Facebook feed, and he was sick of it.

"I saw something posted sincerely with a headline like, 'Obama Issues Executive Order to Take Over U.S.,'" he said. "How do you counter that? You can try to debunk it, but nobody cares about that. They just say it's liberal media bias."

So, three months ago, after a conversation with a childhood friend, he bought a domain name, RealTrueNews.org. He was going to come up with the most ludicrous right-wing conspiracy theories he could think of, give them a narrative and timeline, and put them into quasi-official looking documents.

Then he and that childhood friend, Mike, would post the website on his alt-right friends' Facebook walls to prove how ridiculous they looked.

That was it. That was the whole plan.

It's two weeks before the election now and those documents have accrued millions of views across his website, the document drop site Scribd, and various social media accounts. They've appeared on cable news. They've trended on Facebook and Twitter. Two polling companies, barraged with hatemail from Trump supporters about "leaked" memos created for RealTrueNews articles, have had to put out official statements denying the existence of such memos. Chacon's stories are regularly accepted as fact in the pro-Trump message board canon. YouTube videos with tens of thousands of views exist solely to reinforce sentences and ideas Chacon dreamed up on his laptop in the middle of the night.

How did this happen?

"I don't know. I'm stunned," said Chacon. "If you can, maybe call Monmouth (University polling) and see if they'd accept an apology."

Mike Klasfeld has known Marco Chacon for 30-plus years. They went to middle school together and never really lost touch, especially on Facebook, where they have a "couple of mutual friends who are very right-wing."

"Every time I opened up my Facebook page there would be 20 new, complete bullshit right-wing articles," said Klasfeld. "Either the title would be an outright lie, or the article would have nothing do with the title."

Most of them, Klasfeld said, came from a website called TruthFeed. "Nothing in TruthFeed had any truth in it," he said. So he thought it'd be funny if he and Chacon had a right-wing blog of their own, called "Truthinessfeed," like the Stephen Colbert-coined term about how feelings are the new facts. Klasfeld even bought the domain name.

But by the next day, Chacon had already cooked something up. "What do you think of this?" he asked. It was a fake right-wing news article, replete with forged documents to back it up.

"I said, 'Holy shit, this is good!'" Klasfeld said.

RealTrueNews was born. And right away, the stories were obviously too good to be true.

"I am absolutely *not* trying to fool people the way some of these conservative sites are. *Everything* on there is satirical. It's all funny," said Chacon. "Well, it's supposed to be."

Chacon is right: Most of it is a pretty obvious gag, filled with traditional, bang-you-over-the-head obvious references to the occult. One of his documents is filled out on Illuminati letterhead.

"I know conspiracy stuff cold. But this is all 30 years of *Dungeons & Dragons*," he said. "There's stuff in there that's just obviously fiction. I don't mean absurd potential news. I mean, there's no shred of believability. One of the nations that's 'paying for Hillary's hitmen' is the one Doctor Doom runs."

But here's where it gets messy. After years in IT and white collar jobs, it turns out Chacon is very, very good at the Microsoft Office Suite. Nothing fancy—PowerPoint, Excel, that kind of thing. But when he would upload those documents to RealTrueNews' Scribd page—a sort of document-dumping cloud service that makes PDFs and

PowerPoint presentations visible in your browser—that's where those good-looking documents lost all satirical context.

From RealTrueNews' Scribd page, anybody can screenshot a somewhat believable portion of the document and post it on Twitter, then link to the full document, which nobody takes the time to read.

Then all hell breaks loose.

The first time it happened was in August, when Chacon created a fake Public Policy Polling "internal memo" that talks about "purchasing Republican Disapproval from policymakers" and shows that Donald Trump has a secret 74 percent lead in Florida.

Notably missing from these screenshots? The conclusion section, which includes these sentences.

"The question is going to be how far we can maintain this charade. It might be time to find other jobs. I bet those fuckers at Monmouth are living it up with their interns," it reads. "I also have some contacts at Quinnipiac. I hear they're all smoking up Bernie-grade weed. Fucking College polls."

Still, many Trump-backed message boards and Twitter supporters believed the "memo," and began bombarding PPP's Twitter account, demanding answers.

"Hey @ppppolls saw a post that had this on Scribd…any comment?" wrote one user.

"Yes," PPP's Twitter account replied. "It's really a commentary on the credulity of Trump supporters that so many think this memo could be real."

Monmouth Polling, when faced with a RealTrueNews "leak" of its own, took it a lot more seriously. Chacon's fake Monmouth memo had Hillary Clinton losing in the polls to "a potato."

One alumnus, an assistant campaign manager for the Republican Party in Pennsylvania, demanded answers from the university for a memo it didn't create.

"If it's true then it's a disgrace and there needs to be action," said Tyler Vandegrift. "He is potentially sacrificing the academic reputation of my Alma Mater in favor of partisan politics. People need to have faith in polls."

"For the record, the purported Monmouth University poll memo being circulated is a photoshopped fake—and not a very good one at that," the Monmouth poll's Twitter account wrote. *The Washington Post* even wrote the whole thing up, calling RealTrueNews a pro-Trump site. Scribd forced Chacon to pull the memo down.

He felt bad about that one. And the Megyn Kelly story, which happened a month later.

After all, Chacon is a guy with young kids writing truly ludicrous fanfiction on the internet. It's only being construed as fact by people who really, desperately want to believe the world is run by a shady, nefarious cabal.

There's no better proof than the source material for one of his latest "leaks," focused on a failed "coup" attempt by Mike Pence and Paul Ryan to take over the Republican ticket. One pro-Trump message board posted about 100 messages about the "leak" until an anonymous user noticed something fishy.

"He signed one email '-Chase, No Job Is To [sic] Big,'" wrote the user. "Chase is a character from a popular kids show called Paw Patrol, their motto is 'no job's too big, no pup's too small.'"

Chacon's kids watch *Paw Patrol*, which is on Nickelodeon.

The countless pages of commenters agonizing over his leaks on websites like 4chan and Reddit have started to make more sense to Chacon over the course of the last few weeks.

"I'm sympathetic. I have family that are Trump supporters. This makes people's lives more exciting. From reading these posts, it seems like people get energized and kind of excited," said Chacon, who said he was a lifelong Republican until the party "lost him at [Sarah] Palin."

"They're researching them all as sort of an augmented reality game, and the goal is to catch the bad guys. Like Hillary Clinton and the Illuminati."

But Chacon's goal isn't just to get the people who fall for it on Facebook to be discerning, although he admits that would be nice. He's trying to catch websites who play to their userbases' wildest fears on Facebook and Twitter—and do it for profit.

Chacon has only twice ever seeded his documents to websites like 4chan, an anonymous white supremacist message board where Trump is referred to as "God Emperor." But screenshots of his documents frequently wind up there and on Reddit's /r/The_Donald anyway, where they're met with reverence and not much skepticism.

A screenshot of Chacon's latest "leak" appeared on those sites before landing on conservative news sites and prominent alt-right Twitter feeds earlier this week. The document appears to show a "confidential memo" from pro-Clinton super PAC Correct the Record imploring staff to flood Reddit and Twitter with "high-frequency recent polls."

In the memo, he calls the practice "poll-flogging."

"I thought 'poll-flogging' would be a pretty obvious joke, but I guess it wasn't," said Chacon.

Duped by this, again, was Paul Joseph Watson, an editor at the alt-right conspiracy website Infowars. His tweet of the screenshot received thousands of retweets and, hours later, that same screenshot appeared on conservative blogs like YoungConservatives and Gateway Pundit, who later corrected their stories. Watson pulled the tweet about a day later.

Eleven months ago, Trump himself appeared on Infowars' daily online video show to give the website a half-hour interview and sing its praises.

"I just wanted to finish by saying that your reputation is amazing. I will not let you down," said Trump. "You'll be very, very impressed, I hope, and I think we'll be speaking a lot."

But this wasn't the first time Infowars fell for Chacon's intentionally fake news. The website also fell for "Bucket of Losers" before wiping the story off its website without a correction. (The story still appears on Watson's Infowars sister site, PrisonPlanet.)

The Daily Beast repeatedly asked Watson if he had time to be interviewed on the phone.

"No, I don't. I'd rather boil my own nuts in a pan of steaming hot water," Watson responded via email. "If you'd have been honest in the first email and admitted it was a hit piece, I would have done it. This is why no one trusts the media. You suck, you lie and you mislead people. You're dishonest, smarmy and two faced."

The Daily Beast then asked if he didn't "want [his] readers to know information that you can prove was incorrect."

"I'll correct it when your publication corrects itself and admits that Clinton is a warmongering, continent destroying, ISIS-arming, migrant crisis starting, Saudi Arabia money taking, fake feminist, child molester defending, corrupt as fuck, Wall Street owned, career politician cunt," said Watson.

"Compared to that, a mistaken tweet about a hoax story pales."

He then screenshotted the exchange, and posted it on his Twitter account.

Chacon had always been into elaborate pranks, Klasfeld remembers. When Chacon and his identical twin brother, Eric, used to work at the same white-collar job in their 20s, Klasfeld said, there was one guy who acted like he was better than the place and didn't much like either of them.

So they decided to drive him insane.

Chacon confirmed this account. “He was a slightly arrogant guy who went to MIT,” he said. “We made it look like there was some mysterious force sending messages from inside the network directly to him.”

“It kept escalating and escalating, but this guy didn’t have a clue,” said Klasfeld. “At one point in time, he actually thought it was them, but he said something like, ‘This is beyond your abilities.’ And that just coaxed them into making it all the worse.”

That’s basically how it went, Chacon remembers.

“He did say, ‘I suspect you guys are doing this, but you’re not smart enough,’” he said. “When it was all over, he was kind of pissed for a couple of days. Then he was like, ‘Damn, that was kind of cool.’”

And RealTrueNews, Chacon said, isn’t much different from that prank. It was a gag with a mission of dragging people away from their own extreme self-importance by deploying brilliant stupidity. Chacon called it art.

The website, Chacon said, will end after the election, but he has one more big story in him. If Clinton wins, he says, this will be the headline:

“TRUMP LANDSLIDE.”

On Wednesday, 13 days before the election, Infowars already beat him to it.

Its headline? “DONALD TRUMP HAS WON THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.”

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Thomas Skelton: the murderous jester of Muncaster Castle

wordpress.com

https://hauntedpalaceblog.wordpress.com/2016/11/15/thomas-skelton-the-murderous-jester-of-muncaster-castle/

~ History, Reviews and the Supernatural

Thomas Skelton: the murderous jester of Muncaster Castle

15 *Tuesday* Nov 2016

Evil Clowns

Coulrophobia – the fear of clowns. From fictional phantoms such as Stephen King's Pennywise to serial killer John Wayne Gacy's alter-ego Pogo the Clown, and even the current trend for 'killer clowns' sweeping the US and UK, clowns have developed a somewhat sinister reputation of late. Their painted faces and over-sized clothes intended to convey innocent humour can, to some people, appear both uncanny and disturbing. But evil killer clowns are not an entirely modern phenomenon – if the stories about Thomas Skelton, the last jester of Muncaster Castle – are to be believed. Thomas Skelton is thought by some to be the original Tom Fool from Shakespeare's King Lear, but his 'Last Will and Testament' may hint at a much darker side to this comedian.



My personal favourite: Twisty the Clown, from American Horror Story: Freak Show.

Who was Thomas Skelton?

Thomas Skelton is famous for being the last jester of Muncaster Castle, a stately pile near the village of Ravenglass, Cumbria, in the north-west of England. We know this because he is the named subject of a famous full length portrait that hangs in the castle. The picture depicts a ruddy-faced middle-aged man, dressed in jester's motley, holding a staff of office in one hand, and a document written in doggerel, attested to be his will, hangs beside him.



Thomas Skelton last jester of Muncaster Castle. Image via BBC website.

That a portrait was painted of a family retainer must indicate that he was a beloved family servant. His attire is masterfully comic – his patchwork robe, staff of office and scroll and mock privy seal all act to parody the pompous badges of office of high officialdom, and rather than listing his titles and achievements the scroll offers up what purports to be Tom Fools last will and testament. He even mocks the noble gallant, with the name of his lady pinned into his hatband, aping the fashions of the day, whilst wearing his jesters motley.

Interestingly, the portrait at Muncaster Castle isn't the only portrait of Tom Skelton. EW Ives in his article for the Shakespeare Survey [1] focuses his research on a second portrait, purchased by the Shakespeare Society in 1957 from the Haigh Hall Collection of the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres. It is by examining this portrait and the text of the will, that EW Ives has attempted to pin-point exactly when and where Tom Fool lived.

Dating Tom Fool


Thomas Skelton's Will

Ives uses references to well-known local individuals named in the will, cross checked with burial records from Wigan, to build a picture of the movements and the dates for Tom Skelton. He proposes that although Tom Skelton was originally the jester at Muncaster Castle, upon the death of Lord Pennington, Tom accompanied the young heir when he was sent to live with his relatives, the Bradshaugh's, at Haigh Hall in Wigan. At Haigh Hall, sometime between 1659 – 1665, a portrait of Tom was painted. Sir Roger Bradshaw's wife was a Pennington, and may have known Tom Fool as a child. Ives suggests that when the heir reached his majority and wished to return to Muncaster, he wanted to take the portrait of the much-loved jester with him. As Tom Fool had been a well-loved family servant, at both Muncaster castle and Haigh Hall, a copy of the portrait was commissioned to remain at Haigh Hall (possibly completed in the 1680's) while the original returned with the heir to Muncaster. Ives states that there is no evidence that Skelton returned to Muncaster after 1659, while the young heir was away, so it would seem likely Tom died at Haigh Hall [2].

The current incumbent of Muncaster Castle, Peter Frost-Pennington, confirms that evidence for Thomas Skelton's life in the historical record is hard to find. He was, after all, just a servant, even if he was one esteemed enough to have his likeness captured in oils. Frost-Pennington keeps his margins wide quoting *'1600 give or take 50 years'* [3], a possible references to him comes from a letter dating to the reign of Henry VIII, while another could put him as far back as the late fifteenth century. However if the research by EW Ives is correct, then unfortunately Tom Skelton could not be the model for Shakespeare's Tom Fool in King Lear which dates from about 1605/6.



A Killer Sense of Humour

There were two mains types of fool or jester, the natural fool – one with a physical or intellectual disability; and the artificial fool – an entertainer or comedian. Fools and jesters were often part of a royal court or noble family and by virtue of their position could often speak harsh truths to their 'betters' in the guise of drollery.

Shakespeare often uses the fool as the voice of common sense and wisdom, in Twelfth Night the jester is remarked to be *'wise enough to play the fool'* [4] It is not clear from the scant historical record, or the portrait, which kind of fool Tom Skelton was, but whether natural or artificial, some of his favourite antics have come down to us.


Mr Claypole from Children's TV Series Rent-a-ghost.

Like many fools and jesters, Tom was a valued and trusted servant of the Pennington family, entertaining them with a mixture of practical jokes and wit. He is famed for such clownish antics as cutting off a branch while he sat upon it; greasing up banisters on the staircase to annoy guests, then when asked who was responsible, quipped that he thought *'everyone had a hand in it'.*

However things take a more sinister turn in the anecdotes relating to Tom Skelton reported in *'The Remains of John Briggs a compilation of tales and essays'* published in the Westmorland Gazette and Lonsdale

Magazine in 1825.

Briggs relates what purports to be oral tradition surrounding a murder committed by Thomas Skelton at the behest of one Sir Ferdinand Hoddleston, of Millum Castle. It all began when Helwise, the lovely daughter of Sir Alan Pennington of Muncaster Castle, had disguised herself as a shepherdess and attended the May Day festivities in order to meet her secret lover, Richard the Carpenter. Wild Will of Whitbeck, a local ruffian, had fancied his chances but was rejected by Helwise. To to get his revenge on the lovers he spilled the beans to Sir Ferdinand (yet another wannabe suitor for Helwise).



May Day by William Collins, Wikimedia.

Angered at losing out to a humble carpenter, Sir Ferdinand went to Muncaster Castle bent on informing Sir Alan Pennington of his daughter's low connection. However as chance would have it, first he met with Tom Fool, aka Thomas Skelton, and had the following conversation in which Tom recounted a nasty trick he played on *'Lord Lucy's Footman'.* This seems to have given Sir Ferdinand an idea of Tom's homicidal potential…

"'he asked me' said Tom, 'if the river was passable; and I told him it was for nine of our family had just gone over. – They were geese' whispered Tom; 'but I did not tell him that.-the fool set into the river, and would have drowned, I believe, if I had not helped him out'".

Briggs goes on to recount that Tom also had a personal grudge against Dick the Carpenter –

"'[..]I put those three shillings which you gave me into a hole, and I found them weezend everytime I went to look at them; and now they are only three silver pennies. I have just found it out that Dick has weezend them.'
'Kill him Tom, with his own axe, when he is asleep sometime – and I'll see that thou takest no harm for it.' Replied Sir Ferdinand.
'He deserves it, and I'll do it,' said Tom.
[..]
And the next day while the unsuspecting carpenter was taking an after dinner nap, and dreaming probably of the incomparable beauties of his adorable Helwise, Tom entered the shed, and with one blow of the axe severed the carpenters head from his body. 'There,' said Tom to the servants,'I have hid Dick's head under a heap of shavings; and he will not find that so easily, when he awakes, as he did my shillings.'"

The conclusion of this unhappy tale was that heartbroken Helwise entered a nunnery, while the vengeful Sir Ferdinand met a bloody death fighting the Earl of Richmond (Henry Tudor) at Bosworth Field [5]. Which frankly, seems to place this tale much to early to be attributed to the seventeenth century Tom Skelton.

Other tales claim that Tom Fool would sit under a chestnut tree outside Muncaster Castle, watching travelers go past. Should any traveler ask him for directions, they were at risk of being misdirected to dangerous quicksands near the River Esk [6]. May people consider that his will makes oblique reference to this murderous pass-time.



Detail of the beheading of Holofernes, by Caravaggio.

'But let me not be carry'd o'er the brigg,
Lest fallin I in Duggas River ligg;' [9]

Some tales even have Tom recovering the bodies, decapitating them and burying them under tree trunks.



Death from the Medieval Scapini Tarot. Image from SheWalksSoftly website.

All of this would seem to paint a picture of an evil and conscienceless individual. But is there more to this than meets the eye? The north-west of England was for hundreds of years,a remote and dangerous place. Blood feuds, rough justice and robbery with violence were part and parcel of everyday life. Could these local folk tales and stories have elided themselves onto half remembered anecdotes of the jolly japes and crude practical jokes of Thomas Skelton? In the Middle Ages there was a tradition in the Tarot of showing death in the garb of the Fool, death having the last laugh (of course) and some traditions also associate the Fool with the trickster and with vice [7&8]. Could these earlier darker traditions, coupled with bloody local legends have become associated with the portrait of Tom Skelton. Once the immediate family who knew him died out, the portrait, with its slightly menacing air could easily have attracted macabre tales in a similar way that some Screaming Skull legends may have developed.

The punchline…

Tom Skelton was the last jester of Muncaster Castle, and probably of Haigh Hall as well. Jesters fell out of fashion with the restoration of Charles II to the throne (and I can't imagine the puritans would have had much use for Jesters either!) During his lifetime Skelton appears to have been a much valued family retainer, so much so that not one but two portraits were commissioned of him. Even now, his legend as an entertainer has been revived, and Muncaster Castle hosts an annual Jester Competition in honour of Tom Skelton.

But was Tom Skelton the original Tom Fool from Shakespeare's King Lear? Well probably not, the dating evidence seems to be against it. And more pressingly, was Skelton an evil killer clown? His troubled spirit is said to haunt Muncaster Castle to this day – his heavy tread and the sound of a body (the unfortunate carpenter?) being dragged up the stairs have been reported by several witnesses…is he doomed to walk the earth for eternity re-living his heinous crimes? On that, I will leave you to make up your own mind.

If you want to view the portrait of Thomas Skelton you can visit Muncaster Castle, they even offer paranormal ghost tours so you might even get to meet him….

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About Lenora

I love history and the supernatural. My blog is about the dark side of history and odd goings on!

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Siberian tiger captured after multiple sightings in Russian city

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Oct. 21, 2016 at 2:28 PM



A Siberian tiger was captured after several days of sightings in Vladivostok, Russia. Screenshot: Amur Tiger Center/Facebook

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia, Oct. 21 (UPI) -- Authorities in Russia said a Siberian tiger was captured in the city of Vladivostok after several days of sightings, but residents said the big cat might not be alone.

Police in Vladivostok recently announced they were arming themselves with machine guns to hunt the tiger after several days of sightings culminated in video of the predator running across a busy street.

The Amur Tiger Center announced the tiger was tranquilized and captured safely Friday after a driver spotted it at the side of a road and alerted authorities. The driver captured video of the tiger lurking at the side of a dark road.

The tiger was taken to a rehabilitation center in Alekseevka village, where officials said the animal might be released back into the wild -- albeit much further from urban areas -- in the spring.

Some locals suggested the tiger might not be the only one in the city, pointing out how the spot where the big cat was captured was several miles away from its previously known location.

Officials said it's possible that another tiger is hiding out in the area, but there is currently no evidence to suggest a second big cat.

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Time to Slay Vampire Burials? The Archaeological and Historical Evidence for Vampires in Europe

David Barrowclough[1]

ABSTRACT

The identification of deviant burials as those of 'vampires' is a feature of excavated skeletons from sites across Easter, Central and Southern Europe as well as the Balkans. Based on a close reading of historic and folkloric sources researchers have sought to match features of excavated sites with narrative descriptions drawn from vampire legend and myth. This study critically reviews the recent claims based on sites in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Poland and Slovakia. Whilst it is found that there was a widespread belief in vampires across Europe, it is argued that it is difficult to make absolute claims for 'vampire' burials on archaeological grounds as in most cases there are alternate and equally compelling interpretations of the data.

KEYWORDS

ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY, SIXTEENTH CENTURY, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, VAMPIRE, DEVIANT BURIAL, PLAGUE, BLACK DEATH, FOLKLORE, PAGAN, BURIAL, WITCH, BALKANS, EASTERN EUROPE, CENTRAL EUROPE, SOUTHERN EUROPE, BULGARIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, POLAND, GREECE, ITALY, SLOVAKIA, LESBOS, VENICE, APOTROPAIC, VAMPIRIDZHIJA, PERPERIKON, SOZOPOL, PROSTEJOV, CELAKOVICE, DRAWSKO, GLIWICI, SOUTHWELL, KILTEASHEEN, LAZZARETTO NUOVO, NACHTZEHRER, KAMIEN POMORSKI

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a steady stream of publicity around the excavation of so-called 'Vampire' burials. The validity of such claims is considered in the light of both archaeological and historical evidence, and the criteria for identifying burials as those of 'vampires' discussed. Vampires are a constant of popular culture: film, television and novels. The aim of this paper is to look behind this popular image to consider the archaeological evidence for vampire burials.

A Vampire is a mythical being who subsists by feeding on the blood of living creatures. In folklore vampires often visited loved ones and caused mischief or deaths in the community they inhabited when they were alive. By tradition vampires wore shrouds, and were often described as bloated and of ruddy or dark countenance; unlike the image of the gaunt, pale vampire, which dates from the early 1800s.

The belief in vampires was widespread across Central, Eastern and Southern Europe throughout the Middle Ages (Błaszczyk 2014; Miller 2012). The word itself is derived from the original Slavic term *opyrb* or *opir*, which later appears as *vipir*, *vepir*, or *vapir* (Miller 2012). Belief in vampirism was connected with pagan spiritualism, and spread after the introduction of Christianity in the tenth and eleventh centuries, which introduced inhumation in place of cremation for dead bodies.

Slavic folk beliefs held that those most likely to become a vampire were drunkards, thieves and murderers (Miller 2012), as were those that died by drowning and through suicide, along with the unbaptized and witches. These vampires, *vampir*, were believed to be the manifestation of an unclean spirit possessing a decomposing body. Folk traditions varied regionally, but generally held that vampires left their graves at night to suck the blood of the living, after which they returned to their cemeteries. A variant of this tradition holds that after their death, appearing completely normal, they would arrive at a town and live amongst the people often even marrying

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and fathering children. But at night they would become dangerous and wander the countryside in search of blood, perceived as the essence of life, and haunting the living. In both traditions vampires survived nocturnally by drinking the blood of human victims and were accused of pressing on people in their sleep, causing diseases, particularly epidemics of plague, and even the death of people and livestock (Błaszczyk 2014).

It was not until the early eighteenth century that the term vampire was popularised after an influx of vampire superstition into Western Europe from the Balkans and Eastern Europe. This increased level of vampire superstition in Europe resulted in corpses being staked and people being accused of vampirism. Therefore although vampires themselves are entirely mythical, the belief in their existence and the ascription of the title vampire to actual people is real.

A feature of the vampire myth is their near indestructibility. Folk tradition says that during their first forty days they could be destroyed by either a *Vampiridzhija*, a professional vampire hunter capable of seeing them, or by a wolf. Those that survived this initial period were thought to increase in ferocity (Miller, 2012). Belief in vampires was such that in parts of Europe precautionary steps were taken to inhibit the transmutation of the newly dead into vampires (Błaszczyk 2014). The most commons way of doing this were to destroy the corpses of those thought most at risk of becoming vampires, notably by running a stake through the corpses heart. According to superstition other methods were also viable including: burning the corpse; decapitating the corpse and then burying the head between the feet, the legs, behind the buttocks or away from the body. Alternatively the corpse could be buried upside-down with the face turned to the bottom of the grave, or the corpse could be staked with a wooden peg, preferably of ash, or metal object such as a nail. Sometimes the body or grave would be covered with a pile of stones to weigh the corpse down, and the limbs of the body would be tied together. Another tradition placed apotropaic objects, such as scythes or sickles, on the body, particularly around the throat, or placed stones into the mouth of the deceased. Archaeologists excavating burials found to display one or more of these features are sometimes tempted to hail their discovery as that of a vampire.

The mythology of vampires is therefore well-known with archaeologists and historians explaining the belief in vampirism as an attempt by people of pre-industrial societies to explain the natural, but to them inexplicable, process of death and decomposition of the body (Błaszczyk 2014). Modern science has usually dismissed these tales as folklore, however some archaeologists in Eastern Europe and the Balkans have claimed that they have discovered vampire burials, showing that our ancestors did indeed take these stories seriously (Affleck 2013). These burials all display incredible brutality that the excavators claim matches the methods recorded in folklore to stop a vampire rising from its grave. This paper considers the validity of these claims, and highlights some of the pitfalls of making them.

DISCUSSION

A number of excavated burials have been found where a stake appears to have been driven through the heart or chest of the corpse, which as we have seen is one of the ways that superstition cites can be used to stop a vampire rising from the grave. At Perperikon, an ancient Thracian city in southern Bulgaria close to the border with Greece, excavator Nikolai Ovcharov announced that he had discovered just such a 'vampire grave' dated to the thirteenth century (Mastroianni 2014; Day and Alexander 2014). The skeleton was of a man aged between 40 and 50 and had a heavy piece of ploughshare – an iron rod, used in a plough – hammered through his chest. The ploughshare weighed almost two pounds and was thrust into the body with enough force to break the scapula bone (Day and Alexander 2014).

The burial at Perperikon (Figure 1) was very similar to two other graves excavated in 2012 and 2013 by archeologist Dimitar Nedev, in the Bulgarian Black Sea town of Sozopol, 200 miles to the east, nicknamed 'the twin vampires of Sozopol'. One of the two fourteenth century burials (Brunwasser 2012) had a ploughshare-like object driven through the left side of his rib cage (Miller 2012), while the other had an unidentifiable metal object in his solar plexus (Brunwasser 2012; Zolfagharifard 2013; Mastroianni 2014; Day and Alexander 2014). All three 'vampire' burials were male.



Figure 1. The burial from Sozopol, Bulgaria, with heavy ploughshare.

Archaeologists, including Nedev, interpreted the skeletons pierced through the chest with iron rods as vampires who had been stabbed in this way to keep them from turning into the undead (Miller 2012). The Director of Bulgaria's National Museum, Bozhidar Dimitrov, confirmed that the practice of burial with iron spikes run through the chest was common in rural communities until the first decade of the twentieth century (Affleck 2013; Miller 2012). What is more according to Dimitrov, about one hundred such skeletons have been uncovered in Bulgaria (Day and Alexander 2014; Miller 2012). Nedev's explanation for the large number of vampire burials was due to the existence of a religious sect that was particularly active in Sozopol and the surrounding region of Strandzha in Bulgaria. The rituals practiced in the name of Manichean Bogomilism retained many pagan elements, including the peculiar burial practice of staking the heart (Miller 2012).

According to tradition a variation on staking a corpse through the heart, was to pin the body to the ground with metal stakes or weigh it down with stones. Several examples of this have been recorded across Europe. In 1994 on the island of Lesbos, Greece, near the city of Mytilene, archaeologist Hector Williams discovered an adult male skeleton whose body had been staked to the ground (Figure 2). The medieval skeleton was buried in a crypt hollowed out of an ancient city wall, and unlike the other corpses in the cemetery that had been buried in simple winding sheets, this body had been buried in a heavy wooden coffin. It had then been nailed down in its grave, with several heavy eight-inch-long iron spikes driven through the neck, pelvis and ankle (Pringle 2013). The use of iron and the practice of staking down a corpse are both well-attested in vampire folklore, according to which vampires could not tolerate the touch of iron, supporting the assertion that anti-vampire precautions were being taken by those that buried the body. The body was almost certainly that of a Muslim, making this the only example of a non-Christian corpse to have been found treated in this fashion (Affleck 2013). Perhaps the man's outsider status made the community fear that he might be a candidate for transmution into a vampire.

A similar burial practice was found at Prostejov, Slovakia in 1991, where archaeological investigation of the ancient church of the Holy Trinity revealed a sixteenth-century crypt burial in the presbytery. The corpses legs had been cut off the body, and large stones placed on top of them. The whole had then been buried in a coffin reinforced with iron bars. This burial has been considered to be 'vampiric' for the same reasons as that on Lesbos (Affleck 2013).



Figure 2. Staked skeleton. Lesbos.

At Celakovice, about 30 kilometers north of Prague in the Czech Republic, fourteen graves have been excavated, each with metal spikes driven through their bodies or heavy stones placed upon them. The graves are believed to date from the eleventh or twelfth century, with most of the skeletons belonging to young adults, amongst whom were both male and female burials. It appears that they all died at around the same time, possibly in a epidemic, but it is unclear why the villagers thought these individuals were at risk of becoming vampires (Affleck 2013).

A further three 'vampire' burials have been reported from the excavations of a seventeenth to eighteenth century inhumation cemetery in Drawsko in Poland. All were extended inhumations, supine with heads oriented towards west facing east. Two of them, mature adults, were buried with iron sickles placed around their necks (Figure 3), whilst the third, a younger adult, was buried with the body tied up and stones put on his throat (Figure 4; Affleck 2013; Błaszczyk 2014).



Figure 3. Burial with an iron sickle around its neck, Drawsko, Poland.



Figure 4. Burial with stones around the throat. Drawsko, Poland.

Again the burials were in keeping with folklore. Traditionally sickles were considered apotropaic, having ability to ward off evil. The act of burying the sharp sickles with the corpse was a way of 'deflating' the bloated vampire, which combined with the belief that iron was anathema to vampires, ensured that the dead did not rise. Another method of keeping a suspected vampire in their grave was believed to be the placement of heavy weights upon the body (Affleck 2013; Błaszczyk 2014).

The positioning of heavy stones over bodies has been found in a number of 'vampire' burials. At Vrasta, Bulgaria a medieval 'vampire' burial site was found during excavations of an ancient fortress. The grave of an elderly man of unusually tall height for the time, 1.8 metres, was unearthed. Over his heart was found a deliberately placed processed white stone. His feet had also been tied together, as if to make the corpse stumble if trying to return to the world of the living (Sofia Globe 2014a). Similarly at Plovdiv, also in Bulgaria, a weight was found placed over the corpse, this time the head (see below).

Archaeologist Alexandra Petrova argued that placing a stone on the chest, notably over the heart, was part of an anti-vampire practice, that could also involve stabbing the corpse with a stake or iron knife. The aim was to prevent the deceased's return to the world of the living (Sofia Globe 2014a). Such rituals would be carried out particularly if the deceased fell into one of the categories of 'dangerous' people (above), or was a stranger to the community, or otherwise considered an outsider, thus prompting precautions against him coming back to cause mischief (Sofia Globe 2014a).

A good example of this might be considered the site at Kamien Pomorski, in northwestern Poland where a sixteenth to seventeenth century skeleton was excavated. One of the legs was found with a hole punctured through it (Chubb 2014; Lorenzi 2014). This suggested to the excavator Slawomir Gorka that the leg had been staked to the ground to prevent the individual from rising from its grave. In addition a stone that had been placed in the mouth (see below), which taken together he interpreted as evidene that this had been a 'vampiric burial' (Lorenzi 2014).

Although this may seem conclusive evidence for a 'vampire' burial a cautionary note is introduced by considering the excavation of Southwell in Nottinghamshire, UK. A skeleton was found with metal spikes pinned through the heart, shoulders and ankles. The placement of a spike through the heart in particular attracted public interest because of its long association with vampires in myth and legend (Affleck 2013). Had this burial been found in the Balkans, Central or Southern Europe it would automatically have been taken to be in the vampire tradition. However, this burial dated to the Anglo-Saxon period, AD 550 to 700, which predates the earliest known vampire legend in Europe by several hundred years. Not only can it not be the burial of a vampire, but it also establishes the existence of a burial tradition (in Anglo-Saxon England at least) that appears in the archaeological record to resemble that of 'vampires' but is seemingly unrelated.

Another supposed tell-tale sign of 'vampire' burials is the decapitation of the head or amputation of body parts from the corpse. At Perperikon, Bulgaria (above) in addition to the metal rod-like ploughshare hammered through his chest the left leg of the corpse below the knee had been removed and left beside the skeleton (Mastroianni 2014, Day and Alexander 2014). Similarly, we have seen that at Prostejov, Slovakia (above) the torso had been severed from the legs, over which stones had been placed before the body was buried in a coffin reinforced with iron bars (Affleck 2013). Examples of decapitation seem to be rarer but excavations at the construction site of a ring road near the town of Gliwice, southern Poland did reveal four skeletons found with their heads removed and placed between their legs. Dr Jacek Pierzak, one of the archaeologists, said the skeletons were found with no jewellery, belt buckles, buttons or anything that could aid the task of determining their age, but he estimated them to have they died sometime around the sixteenth-century (Blake 2013; Day 2013).

Tradition records that those accused of being a vampire would sometimes be decapitated, or alternatively they would be hung from a gibbet and left to rot until the head dropped from the body. In both cases when the body was buried the head was placed between the legs, in the hope

that the loss of the head would prevent the corpse rising from the grave (Blake 2013). Historians say that the practice was common in the Slavic countries following the adoption of Christianity (Day 2013). It was this tradition that led Dr Jacek Pierzak to interpret the four Gliwice burials as those of vampires that had been prevented from rising from the grave through their decapitation (Hickman, L. 2013). Although this is possible, a more likely explanation for the decapitated bodies found at Gliwice, is that they are convicted criminals executed at a known nearby gallows (Hickman 2013).

A further class of 'vampire' burials that have been claimed are those where a stone had been placed in the mouth of the corpse. At Plovdiv, Bulgaria, skeleton was found facing westwards, with a brick fragment placed in its mouth, and a clay roofing tile over the head. The skeleton is one of 80 found in a necropolis in the old town part of Plovdiv, tentatively dated from the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries (Sofia Globe staff 2014b). The practice of placing brick fragments into the mouths of the deceased, especially those believed most likely to rise as undead, such as plague victims, was spread from Italy, leading archaeologist Elena Bozhinova to ascribe a vampiric interpretation to the burial (Sofia Globe staff. 2014b).

On the small Italian island of Lazzaretto Nuovo in the Venice lagoon, two miles northeast of Venice, Italian archaeologist Matteo Borrini excavated a plague pit, containing the corpses of plague victims buried in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In doing so discovered what he believed to be the remains of a female 'vampire'. The skeleton dated to the Venetian plague of 1576, in which the artist Titian died (Miller 2012). He found the skull of a mature female with a brick placed in her mouth (Patel 2009). On the basis of the brick he claimed the burial vampiric, referring to the folk tradition that a brick or stone placed between the jaws was said to prevent a vampire from feeding on victims of the plague (Miller 2012). Borrini said gravediggers shoved the brick into the woman's mouth with such force that they had broken some of her teeth (Squires 2009).

Similar violent force was found during the excavation of a burial dated to between the sixteenth and seventeenth century, at a marketplace in the small West Pomeranian town of Kamien Pomorski (above, Figure 5), in northwestern Poland. There were several unusual aspects that led the excavator Slawomir Gorka to claim 'that it is a vampire burial'. These indicative features were the removal of the upper teeth and insertion of a fragment of rock in the mouth. In addition the skeleton featured a leg with a hole likely made from a puncture. This suggested to Gorka that steps had been taken to prevent the individual from rising from its grave (Chubb 2014; Lorenzi 2014).



Figure 5. Skull with brick in its mouth.

In these cases the excavators were aware of an ancient folkloric tradition that a vampire corpse could eat through its shroud. These vampires were sometimes referred to as the *nachtzehrer*, a German term meaning 'night-waster'. The superstition was born among the Kashubes of north-central Poland and goes back to thirteenth-century Bohemia and Moravia. The *nachtzehrer* eats the shroud in which it is wrapped, before leaving its grave to become a 'traditional' vampire (Patel 2009). Epidemic diseases, generally plague, were believed to be a result of the *nachtzehrer's* chewing: plague both decimating the population, and supporting the growth of vampires (Patel 2009).

This superstition probably arose during pandemics when it was common to reopen tombs and mass graves to bury other victims. This exposed people to bodies that were not completely decomposed (Patel 2009). What they would see is a phenomenon called epidermolysis in which the epidermis loosens from the underlying dermis and the nails fall off, exposing the nail beds and giving the impression of new growth. At the same time, the corpse would be going through the putrefaction stage in which the abdomen gets bloated from the build-up of gases. The decay of the gastrointestinal tract contents and lining create a dark fluid called 'purge fluid' that can flow freely from the nose and mouth, and could easily be confused with the blood sucked by the vampire. Further, putrid gases and purge fluid flowing from the mouth would moisten the shroud so that it would sink into the mouth, which would open as the muscles relaxed after rigor mortis, giving the impression that the corpse could eat through its shroud (Patel 2009).

Borrini linked the burial at Lazzaretto Nuovo with the *nachtzehrer* superstition not only because the skeleton was buried in a plague grave, but also because of the brick found in its mouth (Figure 6). 'To kill the vampire you had to remove the shroud from its mouth, which was its food like the milk of a child, and put something uneatable in there,' said Borrini (Miller 2012). Actually, the correct way to kill such a 'vampire', suggested by tradition, was to exhume the body, remove the shroud from its mouth, and replace it with a handful of soil, or better a stone or brick, so the undead would be prevented from chewing and would eventually die of starvation (Patel 2009). It is noteworthy that tradition requires a slightly different treatment to that actually described by the excavator. Furthermore it has been noted that there were several bricks in the vicinity of the corpse, leading some to argue that a brick may have accidentally fallen into the skeletons open mouth (Choi 2012). This may seem far-fetched, but does create some doubt as to the correct interpretation of this burial. Nonetheless, Borrini argued that the discovery at Lazzaretto Nuovo supported the medieval belief that vampires were behind the spread of plagues like the Black Death, and 'helps … authenticate how the myth of vampires was born' (Miller 2012).



Figure 6. Lazzaretto Nuovo

The excavation of two burials overlooking Lough Key at Kilteasheen, Knockvicar, County Roscommon in Ireland is also of significance. Archaeologists found the skeletons of a male aged between 40 and 60, and a young adult probably in his twenties, buried side by side (Owen 2011). Excavator Chris Read reported that, 'One of them was lying with his head looking straight up and a large black stone had been deliberately thrust into his mouth, while the other had his head turned to the side and had an even larger stone wedged violently into his mouth so that his jaws were almost dislocated" (Clancy 2011; Owen 2011). Thus they display the same characteristics as the burials interpreted as those of vampires, and initially, archaeologists believed the ritual of placing a stone in the mouth may have related to vampire slayings (Owen 2011). However they were buried in the 700s long before vampires emerged in European folklore. 'Vampire culture' did not develop until the sixteenth century, and so cannot not be used to explain why stones were found in skeletons dating from the eighth century.

CONCLUSION

The forgoing are the latest in a succession of finds from across western and central Europe that shed new light on just how seriously people took the threat of vampires, and how those beliefs transformed into the modern myth. This review of 'vampire' burials establishes that although belief in vampires was clearly widespread across the Balkans, Central, Eastern and Southern Europe from the eleventh-century, reaching its nadir in the seventeenth-century, caution needs to be exercised before pronouncing any individual burial to be that of a vampire. Archaeology shows that there has long been a fear of the dead rising up to terrorise the living. In 2008, for example, archaeologists found a 4,000-year-old grave in Mikulovice in the Czech Republic where the skeleton had been weighed down at the head and the chest by two large stones (Hickman 2013). Had this skeleton been only four- or five-hundred years old it would no doubt have been claimed as 'vampiric'.

We need to beware presuming that all such unconventional, 'deviant', burials result from a fear of vampires (Chubb 2014). The unusual mortuary practices described here including staking, decapitation and covering with stones are noteworthy, but quite often they may be better explained as punishments for criminals, suicides, plague carriers or even witches rather than suspected vampires.

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11:46, 22 Oct 2016 Updated 11:46, 22 Oct 2016 By Record Reporter dailyrecord.co.uk

Toddler who had ‘a couple of bottles’ is stopped in her car and breathalysed by joking police

THE young offender was a tot who had been out playing in her pink plastic car when she met a couple of officers in the area.



Cheshire Police

POLICE let off an underage motorist who had consumed "a couple of bottles" and had no licence, insurance or MOT.

However, it wasn’t all as it seemed. The ‘young offender’ was a tot who had been out playing in her pink plastic car when she met a couple of officers in the area.

At the time, the officers , in Runcorn, Cheshire, had been trying to seize a genuinely uninsured vehicle.

But when confronted by the little girl, the officers played along and pretended to breathalyse her.

The cops asked if the girl had been drinking that morning before joking: “She’s had a couple of bottles.”

A Cheshire Police spokesman said: "Thankfully, the tot's reading was clear and she was free to go."

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Tokyo's Ghost Cat Festival Scares Up Lots Of 'Meow'-iment

huffingtonpost.com

A “purr-fect” reason for a parade.

10/17/2016 05:49 pm ET | **Updated** 5 hours ago
David Moye Reporter, The Huffington Post
ADVERTISEMENT

The Tokyo neighborhood of Kagurazaka turned out to be the cat’s meow for cosplay enthusiasts on Sunday, thanks to a festival honoring “ghost cats.”

The Kagurazaka Bakeneko Festival celebrates the neighborhood’s connection to cats, which stems from a satirical Japanese novel called *I Am A Cat* by Natsume Soseki.

The term “Bakeneko” means “changed cat” and is used in Japanese folklore for cats that have developed supernatural powers, usually in their old age, according to Yokai.com.

The event honoring them has become popular, attracting cosplayers from as far away as Canada.

The biggest attraction is a parade that’s open to anyone — as long as they’re dressed as a cat.

And a cheap set of kitty ears qualifies, according to City-Cost.com.

Some “feline-ize” their faces with face paint, others make elaborate masks and kitty costumes, according to Stars & Stripes.

The event is a way for the neighborhood to combine three separate events into one big party.

“Kagurazaka is a town known for cats and because Halloween is getting close, we decided to celebrate Halloween, autumn and cats town all together in one parade,” festival organizer Okameya Yuko told Reuters.

That sounds like a “purr-fect” reason.

Reuters contributed to this report.

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When Tomatoes Were Blamed For Witchcraft and Werewolves

atlasobscura.com

People have feared tomatoes for 600 years.

by Romie Stott
October 24, 2016



No other vegetable has been as maligned as the tomato (and it *is* a vegetable, by order of the United States Supreme Court). We call tomatoes killers. We call them rotten. We call them ugly. We call them sad. To find the reason why, you have to go back to the 1500s, when the humble fruit first reached European shores (and it *is* a fruit, by scientific consensus). Through no fault of its own, the tomato stepped into the middle of a continent-wide witchcraft panic, and a scientific community in tumult.

Between 1300 and 1650, thousands of Europeans (mostly women) were executed for practicing witchcraft, in a church-and-government-sanctioned mass hysteria academics call the "witch craze."

31 DAYS OF HALLOWEEN

Women were burned, drowned, hanged, and crushed after trials in both secular and religious courts; and lynched by vigilante mobs. By the most conservative estimate, Dr. Ronald Hutton's count of execution records, between 35,184 and 63,850 witches were killed through official channels—at least 17,000 in Germany alone. Sociologist Nachman Ben-Yehuda estimates the combined death toll could have been as high as 500,000. It was a massive, concerted, prolonged crusade.

At the time of the tomato's importation around 1540, diligent witch hunters were particularly interested in discerning the makeup of flying ointment—the goo witches smeared on their broomsticks (or on themselves, pre-broomstick). This potent magical gunk did more than enable airborne meetings with the devil; it could also transform the witch—or her unwilling dupe—into a werewolf, as described in case studies by prolific witch-hunter Henry Boguet, who noted that witches particularly enjoyed becoming werewolves in order to attack the left sides of small children, and to stalk through cursed and withering cropland.

The key ingredients, recorded by the pope's physician Andres Laguna in 1545, were agreed by consensus to be hemlock, nightshade, henbane, and mandrake—the final three of which are the tomato's close botanical relatives. Why any woman would keep this ointment around in such a dangerous climate, we can only speculate; the best guesses are drug addition, atropine-based painkiller, and they didn't. In contrast, tomatoes' similarity to deadly nightshade is plain to the untrained eye: the plants are practically identical. And although tomatoes were clearly edible—the Aztecs ate them, after all— it's hard to tell the difference between yellow cherry tomatoes and hallucinogenic mandrake fruit.

Then as now, the overlap between people suspicious of new foods and people suspicious that an adventurous neighbor might be a servant of the devil was pretty high. Try a tomato and risk turning into a werewolf, or being branded a witch? No thank you. Tomato eating was best left to places like Spain, where the Spanish Inquisition had at least temporarily declared belief in witchcraft (and therefore accusations of witchcraft) heretical.

But even men of science—men who would never believe in something absurd like *magic*—found the tomato exasperating. Until the Enlightenment took hold, botanists relied on a thousand-year-old categorical framework established by Galen, a physician who lived in Ancient Rome. When new and unfamiliar American plants arrived —corn, blueberries, chocolate—naturalists didn't know what to do. They scrambled to figure out ways the new imports were actually *old* plants that could slot into the existing system. The alternative was terrifying: accepting that the great Galen had never heard of these plants would imply, as David Gentilcore describes in *Pomodoro,*

that the ancients hadn't known everything; that perhaps the world was in some sense unknowable; that the Garden of Eden hadn't existed.

Given the tomato's similarity to an existing plant—nightshade—it could have escaped the controversy. However, bits of Galen's writings referred to plants or animals whose identities had never been nailed down, and American arrivals seemed like candidates to fill the gaps. One such mystery plant was the *λυκοπέρσιον,* which translates to wolf-*something*—maybe "wolf banisher." It transliterates to "lycopersion," but during the Age of Exploration was mis-transcribed as "lycopersicon": wolf peach.

Galen describes it as a poisonous Egyptian plant with strong-smelling yellow juice and a ribbed celery-like stalk. At least as early as 1561, Italian and Spanish botanists, no doubt aware of witchfinders' werewolf suspicions, were kicking around the idea that the wolf peach and the tomato could be one and the same.

This classification was controversial. Not only was the tomato far from poisonous, but as naturalist Costanzo Felici observed in 1569, it couldn't have come from ancient Egypt *and Peru*. As seed traders waited for the vernacular to establish itself, their manifests might list tomatoes as golden apples, Peruvian apples, love apples, wolf peaches, and more.

The debate was eventually settled by Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, Louis XIV's botanist, who accepted the tomato's werewolfish "lycopersicum" name in his hugely influential three-volume 1694 *Elemens de Botanique* . (Surely you've noticed that "lycopene" sounds an awful lot like "lycanthropy.") He went so far as to call the tomato the "*Lycopersicum rubro non striato*"—the red wolf's peach without ribs.

The name stuck, Tournefort's treatise was definitive, and his definition dovetailed with existing beliefs, especially in England, where physicians had dismissed the tomato as unworkable. According to James I's apothecary John Parkinson, though tomatoes could "coole and quench the heate and thirst of the hot stomaches" in places like Spain, Italy, and the Caribbean, England was already clammy enough. Eat tomatoes in a cool, rainy climate, and you'd find yourself on the wrong side of the medieval equivalent of "feed a fever; starve a cold."

English barber/surgeon John Gerard had gone so far as to say tomatoes were "corrupt" in his 1597 *Generall Historie of Plantes*. "Rank and stinking," he clarified, in case a reader was tempted by the Spanish and Italian recipes he included (fried with salt and pepper, or eaten raw with vinegar).

Much of the English population agreed, as did their descendants in what would become New England. Tomatoes were pretty, but gross and just maybe satanic even according to scientists. Adventurous eaters like Thomas Jefferson were welcome to partake, but the rest of us were better off not risking our stomachs. A contingent of English emigrants in America rejected tomatoes all the way up to 1860, when the U.S. Civil War finally mainstreamed tomato-eating—an aversion that gave rise to the medical shorthand "the tomato effect," a description of effective therapies avoided for cultural reasons.

That's not quite the same as a culture-wide belief that tomatoes were poisonous, which probably never occurred. Andrew Smith, author of *The Tomato in America*, could only locate three references to tomato deadliness in his survey of pre-1860 American literature—and in all of them, the authors insisted they themselves weren't afraid. The most prolific American anti-tomato lecturer was a Harvard-trained doctor named Dio Lewis, who spent the 1850s blaming tomatoes for everything from bleeding gums to hemorrhoids—because, he argued, tomatoes' medicinal powers were so strong it was easy to overdose. For the most part, the people who didn't eat tomatoes just didn't like them, in the same way most of us don't make dandelions and ants a staple of our diets.

But it's hard for facts to get in the way of a well-established superstition. One contemporary urban legend ties the tomato to a rash of lead poisoning—acidic tomatoes leeching the lead out of pewter dinnerware to drive 16th-century aristocrats mad—but tomatoes aren't acid enough, pewter dishes were never common enough, and lead poisoning accumulates too slowly to be linked to a specific meal. In another frequently-repeated tale, debunked by Joan R. Calahan in *50 Health Scares That Fizzled*, Colonel Robert Gibbon Johnson astonished a crowd in Salem, New Jersey with his brave ability to eat a basket of tomatoes and live. There's even a fabricated story that George Washington's chef tried to poison him with tomatoes.

More recently, when NASA distributed tomato seeds that had been to orbit, the *L.A. Times* freaked out about the imagined potential for poisonous mutations, and the panic went international. When NASA did the same with



basil, nobody cared.

A lawyer from my hometown of Winchester, Massachusetts told me a few years ago that there was a law on the books banning tomato gardens—an artifact of early 20th century anti-Italian racism, meant to keep the neighborhood cleanly Anglo-Saxon. A search through the town clerk's annual reports from the town's founding to the present makes it clear no such bylaw ever existed. But my lawyer *believed* it did, just as many law blogs happily (and inaccurately) report that the *General Laws of Massachusetts* forbid putting tomatoes in chowder.

My lawyer didn't realize she was repeating a werewolf myth, done up in sheep's clothing. It slotted Massachusetts zoning codes into an older story of Puritan sumptuary legislation which regulated minute personal behaviors and set the stage for the Salem Witch Trials, and it replaced werewolves with southern Italian immigrants—who were, according to bigots in the early 1900s, dangerously swarthy, overly sexual, unpredictably violent, and presumably slavering.

The thing that didn't change was tomatoes. With tomatoes, we made up our minds a long time ago.

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Tourist faces jail for 'wanting to sleep desperately' during religious event

06/10/2016 news.com.au

October 6, 20166:30am



Dutch tourist Klass Haytema is escorted by Myanmar police after appearing before a court in Mandalay. Picture: Kyaw Zay Win / AFP

Lauren McMah

A TOURIST is facing two years in a Burmese prison after he pulled a loudspeaker plug during a religious sermon near his hotel so he could get some sleep.

Dutch citizen Klaas Haytema, 30, has apologised for the September 23 incident, in which he allegedly disconnected the amplifier during late-night Buddhist prayers at a religious hall in the tourist city of Mandalay in northern Myanmar.

Soldiers were deployed to protect Haytema from an angry mob of people who gathered outside his hotel after he silenced the sermon.

He was arrested and charged with insulting religion and has been detained while awaiting trial.

"I wanted to sleep desperately. I couldn't stand the noise and checked outside the hotel," Haytema said at an initial court hearing, according to the *Coconuts Asia* news website.

"I saw that children were playing. I thought that they were playing it [the sermon] and disconnected the amplifier.

"I did not notice that it was a religious building. I am really sorry and I really apologise."



Police accuse Haytema of insulting religion by pulling the plug on a speaker relaying a late-night Buddhist sermon in Mandalay. Picture: AFP/STR

Police accuse Haytema of insulting religion by pulling the plug on a speaker relaying a late-night Buddhist sermon in Mandalay. Picture: AFP/STR*Source:*AFP

The man who was reciting the sermon pressed charges against Haytema for insulting the Buddhist religion.

A local legal officer recommended the alleged offence was serious enough to warrant a criminal trial, *The Telegraph* reported. The offence carries a two-year jail sentence.

In a further blow to Haytema, immigration officials have also charged him with violating the terms of his visa.

Local immigration department head Thaung Dan told the *Myanmar Times* Haytema had breached two provisions in the visa: that visitors should follow the existing laws of Myanmar, as well as the customs of Myanmar.

"If someone applies for a visa to enter Myanmar, they have to follow the rules and regulations laid out in the visa," he said.

Insulting religion is taken seriously among Myanmar's majority Buddhist population.



A number of tourists have run into trouble with authorities in Myanmar after allegedly insulting religion. Picture: iStock

A number of tourists have run into trouble with authorities in Myanmar after allegedly insulting religion. Picture: iStock*Source:*istock

Mandalay, where Haytema allegedly committed the offence, is an especially culturally and religiously conservative region.

But the Dutch man is far from the first tourist to run afoul of Myanmar's strict rules protecting Buddhism.

New Zealand man Philip Blackwood served two and a half years after he posted a picture of Buddha on Facebook in 2014.

The online flyer included a "psychedelic" depiction of Buddha wearing headphones and was used to promote cheap drinks at a bar event. Blackwood was released on amnesty 10 months into his sentence.

In July, a Spanish tourist was reportedly kicked out of Myanmar after monks in the ancient town of Bagan took offence an exposed tattoo of Buddha on his leg.

The influence of religious hardliners appears to be intensifying in Myanmar in response to the country's new civilian-led government's enthusiasm for tourism and foreign investment.

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Chinese tourists return stolen toilet seat to Japanese hotel

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Oct. 20, 2016 at 1:48 PM



A pair of tourists from China apologized to a hotel in Japan for stealing a spare toilet seat they found under the bed in their room. Screenshot: NTDChinese/YouTube

NAGOYA, Japan, Oct. 20 (UPI) -- A pair of Chinese tourists returned a stolen toilet seat to a Japanese hotel with an apology and explanation that they didn't realize it belonged to the facility.

A hotel in Nagoya contacted a travel agency after a toilet seat was reported missing from a room where two tourists from Zhejiang, China, stayed Monday.

The agency said the toilet seat was sent back to the hotel after the couple and their travel group arrived at Mount Fuji.

The travel company released a statement on behalf of the couple, who said they found the spare toilet seat under the bed and thought it was property left behind by previous hotel guests.

"I offer my sincere apology and regrets," the statement said. "I hope the hotel and the local travel agency can treat this with leniency. I promise this improper behavior won't happen again."

The couple said they plan to apologize to the hotel's parent company during their upcoming scheduled stay at another facility owned by the chain.

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Scientists Trace Society's Myths to Primordial Origins

scientificamerican.com

Analyzing how stories change in the retelling down through the generations sheds light on the history of human migration going as far back as the Paleolithic period

- By Julien d'Huy on September September 29, 2016



Credit: Illustration by Jon Foster

In Brief

- Scholars have long wondered why complex mythical stories that surface in cultures widely separated in space and time are strikingly similar.
- New research models harness conceptual and statistical tools from evolutionary biology to untangle the history of myths.
- Phylogenetic trees reveal that species of myths evolve slowly and parallel patterns of mass human migration out of Africa and around the globe.
- Recent studies provide insights into the prehistoric origins of some myths and the migration of Eurasians to North America more than 15,000 years ago.

The Greek version of a familiar myth starts with Artemis, goddess of the hunt and fierce protectress of innocent young women. Artemis demands that Callisto, “the most beautiful,” and her other handmaidens take a vow of chastity. Zeus tricks Callisto into giving up her virginity, and she gives birth to a son, Arcas. Zeus’ jealous wife, Hera, turns Callisto into a bear and banishes her to the mountains. Meanwhile Arcas grows up to become a hunter and one day happens on a bear that greets him with outstretched arms. Not recognizing his mother, he takes aim with his spear, but Zeus comes to the rescue. He transforms Callisto into the constellation Ursa Major, or “great bear,” and places Arcas nearby as Ursa Minor, the “little bear.”

As the Iroquois of the northeastern U.S. tell it, three hunters pursue a bear; the blood of the wounded animal colors the leaves of the autumnal forest. The bear then climbs a mountain and leaps into the sky. The hunters and the animal become the constellation Ursa Major. Among the Chukchi, a Siberian people, the constellation Orion is a hunter who pursues a reindeer, Cassiopeia. Among the Finno-Ugric tribes of Siberia, the pursued animal is an elk and takes the form of Ursa Major.

Although the animals and the constellations may differ, the basic structure of the story does not. These sagas all belong to a family of myths known as the Cosmic Hunt that spread far and wide in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas among people who lived more than 15,000 years ago. Every version of the Cosmic Hunt shares a core story line—a man or an animal pursues or kills one or more animals, and the creatures are changed into constellations.

Folklorists, anthropologists, ethnologists and linguists have long puzzled over why complex mythical stories that surface in cultures widely separated in space and time are strikingly similar. In recent years a promising scientific approach to comparative mythology has emerged in which researchers apply conceptual tools that biologists use to decipher the evolution of living species. In the hands of those who analyze myths, the method, known as phylogenetic analysis, consists of connecting successive versions of a mythical story and constructing a family tree that traces the evolution of the myth over time.

My phylogenetic studies make use of the extra rigor of statistical and computer-modeling techniques from biology to elucidate how and why myths and folktales evolve. In addition to the Cosmic Hunt, I have analyzed other major families of myths that share recurring themes and plot elements. Pygmalion stories depict a man who creates a sculpture and falls in love with it. In Polyphemus myths, a man gets trapped in the cave of a monster and escapes by insinuating himself into a herd of animals, under the monster’s watchful eye.

This research provides compelling new evidence that myths and folktales follow the movement of people around the globe. It reveals that certain tales probably date back to the Paleolithic period, when humans developed primitive stone tools, and spread together with early waves of migration out of Africa. My phylogenetic studies also offer insights into the origins of these myths by linking oral stories and legends passed down from generation to generation to motifs that appear in Paleolithic rock art images. Ultimately I hope my ongoing quest to identify prehistoric protomyths may even offer a glimpse of the mental universe of our ancestors when *Homo sapiens* was not the only human species on Earth.

Trail of the Cosmic Hunt

Carl Jung, the founding father of analytic psychology, believed that myths appear in similar forms in different cultures because they emerge from an area of the mind called the collective unconscious. “Myths are first and foremost psychic phenomena that reveal the nature of the soul,” Jung argued. But the dissemination of Cosmic Hunt stories around the world cannot be explained by a universal psychic structure. If that were the case, Cosmic Hunt stories would pop up everywhere. Instead they are nearly absent in Indonesia and New Guinea and very rare in Australia but present on both sides of the Bering Strait, which geologic and archaeological evidence indicates was above water between 28,000 and 13,000 B.C. The most credible working hypothesis is that Eurasian ancestors of the first Americans brought the family of myths with them.

To test this hypothesis, I created a phylogenetic model. Biologists use phylogenetic analysis to investigate the evolutionary relationships between species, constructing branching diagrams, or “trees,” that represent relationships of common ancestry based on shared traits. Mythical stories are excellent targets for such analysis because, like biological species, they evolve gradually, with new parts of a core story added and others lost over time as it spreads from region to region.

In 2012 I constructed a skeletal model based on 18 versions of the Cosmic Hunt myth previously collected and published by folklorists and anthropologists. I converted each of those accounts of the myth into discrete story elements, or “mythemes”—a term borrowed from the late French structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. Like genes, mythemes are heritable characteristics of “species” of stories, which pass from one generation to the next and change slowly. Examples of Cosmic Hunt mythemes include: a woman breaks a taboo; a divine person stops a hunter; a god transforms an animal into a constellation. My initial analysis yielded a database of 44 mythemes. For each version of a story, I then coded mythemes as either 1 (present) or 0 (absent) and applied a successive series of statistical algorithms to trace evolutionary patterns and establish family trees. In 2013 I expanded the model to include 47 versions of the story and 93 mythemes. Eventually I used three separate databases to apply different algorithms and cross-check my results.

One of the most up-to-date phylogenetic trees of the Cosmic Hunt [*see illustration below*] suggests that the family of myths arrived in the Americas at several different points. One branch of the tree connects Greek and Algonquin versions of the myth. Another branch indicates passage through the Bering Strait, which then continued into Eskimo country and to the northeastern Americas, possibly in two different waves. Other branches suggest that some versions of the myth spread later than the others from Asia toward Africa and the Americas.

A Mythical Metamorphosis

Evolutionary biologists have observed that most species do not change much for the greater part of their histories. When significant evolutionary change occurs, it is generally restricted to rare and very fast events of branching speciation. This phenomenon is called punctuated equilibrium. The same appears to hold true with myths. When sister mythological versions diverge rapidly because of migration bottlenecks, challenges from rival populations or new environmental and cultural inputs, those events are followed by extended periods of stability.

By and large, structures of mythical stories, which sometimes remain unchanged for thousands of years, closely parallel the history of large-scale human migratory movements. Ironically, phylogenetic analysis reveals that one of the most enchanting mythical stories of sudden transformation—the Pygmalion story—is a prime example of this stable pattern of evolution.

As the Greeks tell it, Pygmalion, a handsome sculptor from Cyprus, spurns the company of local women relegated to a life of loveless prostitution for failing to pay proper homage to Aphrodite, the goddess of love and

patron deity of the island. Throwing himself into his work, Pygmalion chisels an ivory statue of a woman, which he names “Galatea” (or “sleeping love”). He dresses the sculpture in fancy clothes and jewels, kisses and caresses it, and talks to it every day. During a festival in honor of Aphrodite, Pygmalion goes to the goddess’s temple, sacrifices a bull and prays for a wife just like his beloved statue. When he returns home and kisses Galatea, he is surprised by the statue’s warmth. Aphrodite has brought Galatea to life.

Roman poet Ovid immortalized the Greek folktale in *Metamorphoses* and inspired countless writers, dramatists and artists ever since.

My research suggests the evolution of the Pygmalion myth followed a human migration from northeastern to southern Africa that previous genetic studies indicate took place around 2,000 years ago. In folktales told by various tribes along that route, a man carves an image of a woman and falls in love with it; the doll comes to life and marries the master. According to the Venda of South Africa, a man sculpts a woman out of wood. After she is animated, the head of the tribe tries to kidnap her. The sculptor resists and throws the woman to the ground, whereupon she turns back into wood.

A phylogenetic tree I constructed using the Greek version of Pygmalion and a version from the Bara people of Madagascar as starting points yielded intriguing results. The Greek and Bara myths mirror each other structurally, even though they represent the greatest geographic separation of any of the stories included in the computer model. In addition, the Bara settled on an island that did not allow for great population expansion and mythological diversification, and the Greeks remained isolated for much of their history from exposure to African folktales. Nevertheless, both the Bara and Greek versions of the myth bear remarkable similarities to an earlier version of the story from the Berber tribes of the Sahara.

Statistical and empirical analysis suggests that the accounts of the Greeks and Baras probably preserve a version of the Pygmalion saga that originated with the Berbers between 3,000 and 4,000 years ago and appears to encapsulate a very ancient version of the myth: A man makes a statue from a tree trunk to lessen his solitude; he or another man clothes it; the statue comes to life, thanks to a god, and turns into a beautiful young lady; she becomes the wife of her creator, even though another person also desires to marry her. Of course, the real protomyth was probably as rich in complexity as the versions on which the reconstruction is based.

The Monster in the Cave

In the past, comparative mythology scholars relied heavily on intuition and manual processing of information, which limited both the breadth and granular detail of the work they could do. With computer-aided phylogenetic analysis, we can now test the impact of mythological borrowings between different cultural groups. We can create large and flexible databases that incorporate the wealth of empirical observations by scholars over the years. And we can expand those databases to include new versions of stories and test previous results.

I constructed the initial model for a phylogenetic study of the Polyphemus myth in 2012 based on 24 versions of the story from Europe and North America and 79 mythemes. Then I progressively enlarged the sample size to include 56 versions of the story and 190 mythemes drawn from a variety of previous studies published in English, French, German and Italian. I also created three separate databases and applied a variety of evolutionary and statistical algorithms to calibrate and cross-check my results.

Polyphemus, the monstrous one-eyed, human-eating progeny of Poseidon, god of the sea, makes a dramatic appearance in Homer’s *Odyssey*. When Odysseus lands on the island of Cyclops in search of food, he and 12 men surreptitiously enter Polyphemus’ cave. The giant returns from grazing his sheep, seals the entrance and devours four of Odysseus’ men before leaving the next morning to tend his flock. That evening, after Polyphemus eats two more men, Odysseus gets him drunk on undiluted wine. Polyphemus asks his generous guest to tell him his name, and Odysseus replies, “Nobody.” Once Polyphemus falls asleep, Odysseus blinds him with a sharpened stick hardened in a fire. Polyphemus screams for help, but when other Cyclopses arrive and ask who blinded him, he answers, “Nobody.” Meanwhile Odysseus and his remaining men escape by clinging to the underbellies of the monster’s sheep as Polyphemus lets them out to graze.

The Blackfoot Indians, an Algonquin tribe that depended on hunting buffalo to get enough food to survive, passed a related story from generation to generation. The trickster Crow, who is both human and bird, hides a herd of buffalo in a cave. Crow is eventually captured and placed over a smoke hole, which explains why, ever

since, crows are black. Crow promises to free the buffalo. But he breaks his promise. Two heroic hunters transform themselves—one into a puppy, the other into a wood staff. Crow's daughter picks up the puppy and staff and takes them to the cave. There the two hunters transform themselves again, one into a large dog, the other into a man, to drive the buffalo aboveground. They get past Crow by hiding under the skin of a buffalo as the herd charges out of the cave.

A composite phylogenetic tree of the family of Polyphemus myths indicates that the stories followed two major migratory patterns: The first, in Paleolithic times, spread the myth in Europe and North America. The second, in Neolithic times, paralleled the proliferation of livestock farming.

One version of the Polyphemus story, conserved in a sketchy form in Switzerland, may preserve an old form: The monster, a dwarf with one eye found by a hunter, is a master of beasts on a mountain. But this form of the story disappeared, probably as glaciers advanced during the Last Glacial Maximum, which peaked around 21,500 years ago. Then a new version, in which the monster resides in a shelter, appears to have been disseminated, thanks to successive migrations from areas in the Caucasus and Mediterranean that had provided refuge for people and other biological species from severe climate changes. Links in the phylogenetic tree suggest the Homeric versions of Polyphemus created an oral tradition with an independent diffusion among many groups, for instance, the ancestors of the peoples of modern-day Hungary and Lithuania.

Quest for Ancestral Protomyths

Phylogenetic reconstructions of both the Polyphemus and Cosmic Hunt stories build on decades of research by scholars who based their work primarily on oral and written versions of folktales and legends. The current models also incorporate empirical observations of mythological motifs in prehistoric rock art. Similarities in certain rock art motifs and the reconstructed stories open a new window on the mental universe of the first humans who migrated across the Bering Strait to the New World between 30,000 and 15,000 years ago.

In the myth of Polyphemus, as its original public most likely heard it, a hunter faces one or many monsters that possess a herd of wild animals. He enters the place where the monster keeps the animals and finds his way out blocked by a large obstacle. The monster tries to kill him. The hero manages to escape by clinging to the underbelly of one of the animals.

This protomyth—revealed by three separate phylogenetic databases, many statistical methods and independent ethnological data—reflects the belief, widely held by ancient cultures, in the existence of a master of animals who keeps them in a cave and the need for an intermediary to free them. It could also be part of a Paleolithic conception of how game emerges from an underworld. At the Cave of the Trois-Frères (or "three brothers") in the French Pyrenees, frequented during the upper Paleolithic, a panel shows a small creature with the head of a bison and the body of a human, which seems to be holding a short bow. Lost in the middle of a herd of bison, another animal, similar to a bison, turns its head toward the human hybrid, and the two creatures exchange gazes. On examination, the left rear thigh of the "bison" is not the thigh of a ruminant; its proportions are much smaller, like a human thigh—so much so that archaeologist André Leroi-Gourhan took it for a human silhouette. Moreover, the artist has meticulously drawn the anus and the vulvar orifice. These two elements can be compared with some Amerindian versions of the Polyphemus story, where the man hides himself in the animal by entering its anus.

The first version of the Cosmic Hunt, the ancestor of all the other accounts of the story of Callisto, reconstructed from three different databases, would have gone like this: A man is hunting an ungulate; the hunt takes place in the sky or ends there; the animal is alive when it is transformed into a constellation; and this constellation is the one we know as Ursa Major.

This reconstruction of the Cosmic Hunt story might explain the famous Paleolithic "well scene" found in a cave in Lascaux, France. The intriguing lone black spot near the bison's withers would thus be a star. The fixedness of the animal, which does not give the impression of actually charging, would make sense if it represented a constellation rather than an action. Moreover, according to some experts, the man might be upright and the bison ascending, which echoes the rise into the sky of the protomythic animal. Finally, the black stains on the ground under the bison suggest the bloodstained autumnal leaves of the hunted animal.

Linking a mythical story and a Paleolithic image is tricky. These examples serve simply to illustrate the interpretive power of the phylogenetic method, which makes it possible to propose plausible hypotheses and to

recover stories that disappeared long ago.

Primeval Dragons and Serpents

My current research lends credibility to the out-of-Africa theory of human origins, asserting that anatomically modern humans originated in Africa and spread from there to the

rest of the world. It complements phylogenetic studies by biologists that indicate the first major wave of human migration radiating from Africa followed the southern coastline of Asia, peopled Australia some 50,000 years ago and reached America from an east Asian source. Both the biological and mythological research point to a second migration reaching North America at more or less the same time from a north Eurasian source.

I recently constructed a phylogenetic supertree to trace the evolution of serpent and dragon myths that emerged during those early waves of migrations. One protonarrative that most likely predated the exodus from Africa includes the following core story elements: Mythological serpents guard water sources, releasing the liquid only under certain conditions. They can fly and form a rainbow. They are giants and have horns or antlers on their heads. They can produce rain and thunderstorms. Reptiles, immortal like others who shed their skin or bark and thus rejuvenate, are contrasted with mortal men and/or are considered responsible for originating death, perhaps by their bite. In this context, a person in a desperate situation gets to see how a snake or other small animal revives or cures itself or other animals. The person uses the same remedy and succeeds. I constructed this protomyth from five separate databases by varying both the definition of serpent/dragon and the units of analysis, including individual versions of the same tale type, types of serpents and dragons, and cultural or geographical areas.

Eventually I hope to go back even further in time and identify mythical stories that may shed light on interactions during the Paleolithic period between early *H. sapiens* and human species that went extinct. Evolutionary biologists have identified possible interbreeding with Neandertals, Denisovans and perhaps other archaic humans. Material exchanges, as well as language and mythological borrowings, may have also occurred. My more immediate goal is to expand and refine the burgeoning phylogenetic supertree of Paleolithic myths, which already includes stories of the life-giving sun as a big mammal and of women as primordial guardians of sacred knowledge sanctuaries.

More to Explore

A Cosmic Hunt in the Berber Sky: A Phylogenetic Reconstruction of Palaeolithic Mythology. Julien d'Huy in *Les Cahiers de l'AARS*, No. 16, pages 16, 93–106; 2013.

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Première Reconstruction Statistique d'un Rituel Paléolithique: Autour du Motif du Dragon. Julien d'Huy in *Nouvelle Mythologie Comparée/New Comparative Mythology*, No. 3. Published online March 18, 2016.

From our Archives

Chain Letters and Evolutionary Histories. Charles H. Bennett, Ming Li and Bin Ma; June 2003.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

Julien d'Huy is a doctoral candidate in history at Pantheon-Sorbonne University in Paris. His multidisciplinary research, conducted in association with the Institute of African Worlds, draws on evolutionary theory and computer modeling in the comparative analysis of myths.

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Fire, Fire! The Tragic Burning of the Cotton Library

blogs.bl.uk

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

23 October 2016

2016 has been a year of anniversaries, some of them more notable than others. Already this year we have commemorated 350 years since the Great Fire of London (1666), the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings (1066), and 1,000 years since the Battle of *Assandun* (1016). The 285th year since the infamous Cotton Library fire (1731) falls on 23 October, and although this may not be a date that immediately leaps to mind, it is a cause of great sorrow for many medievalists.



Cotton

A portrait of Sir Robert Cotton, commissioned in 1626 and attributed to Cornelius Johnson

Sir Robert Cotton (1571–1631) was one of the greatest British collectors of manuscripts of all time. His library was vast and of huge national significance, especially when one recounts some of the books and documents it contained: two of the original manuscripts of Magna Carta, the Lindisfarne Gospels, Beowulf, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the Cotton Genesis, the state papers of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, the Vespasian Psalter ... one could easily go on. Cotton made his library available to other scholars during his own lifetime, and enabled certain books to be borrowed (which is why some items, such as the famous Utrecht Psalter, ultimately entered other collections). Finally, 70 years after Cotton died, his manuscripts were accepted on behalf of the nation, and in 1753 they formed the first foundation collection of the new British Museum.



Cotton_charter_xiii Studio c06259-02

The fire-damaged manuscript of King John's Magna Carta, 1215, rendered almost illegible following the 1731 Cotton fire: Cotton Charter XIII 31A.

Acquiring the Cotton collection for the nation should be regarded as a moment of great rejoicing. This was the first occasion in the British Isles that any library had passed into national ownership, bringing with it such treasures as Magna Carta and the largest collection of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts assembled by any antiquary. But, sadly, a less joyful event happened in 1731, that threatened to destroy this gift for all time.



Cotton_ms_vespasian_a_i_f030v

The beautiful Vespasian Psalter, 8th century, one of the many treasures of the Cotton Library: Cotton MS Vespasian A I, f. 30v.

By October 1731, the Cotton manuscripts had been placed for storage at Ashburnham House in London, adjacent to Westminster School. Their former home had been regarded, ironically, as a fire hazard; and so the books had been transferred to the ill-fated (and unfortunately named) Ashburnham House. There, on the night of 23 October 1731, a terrible fire broke out, perhaps starting in a fireplace below the floor where the manuscripts were kept. Despite the efforts of the Deputy Librarian and others, who reportedly were forced to fling scores of books out of the building, a great number of the Cotton manuscripts were badly damaged by the flames and the water used to extinguish them, and a few volumes were destroyed in their entirety. Many unique manuscripts were lost for good, such as Asser's biography of King Alfred of Wessex. The following day, the Westminster schoolboys were said to have gathered fragments of manuscripts floating like butterflies in the wind, some of which have survived

until this day (some leaves of the Cotton Genesis, for instance, passed into a collection at Bristol, before being returned to the British Museum in the 1960s).



Cotton MS Fragments XXXII

Boxes containing portions of the manuscripts almost destroyed in the 1731 fire, now classified as Cotton Fragments XXXII.

During the 19th century, a restoration programme was carried out at the British Museum, during which many of the burnt volumes were separated, their pages flattened, inlaid in paper mounts and then rebound. There is a masterful study of this process by Andrew Prescott, in *Sir Robert Cotton as Collector*, edited by Christopher Wright (The British Library, 1997). Meantime, however, many of Cotton's precious manuscripts had suffered irreversible fortunes. One of the two surviving copies of King John's Magna Carta, 1215, and the only one with the Great Seal still affixed, was rendered illegible as a result of the fire and efforts to save the text, and the seal was reduced to a glob of molten wax. The illustrated Cotton Genesis, already mentioned, suffered severe damage to its illuminations. The pages of Beowulf were burned along their edges, with the result that small portions of the letters reputedly started to crumble, before the volume was inlaid and rebound.



Cotton MS Tiberius E VI

An example of an inlaid Cotton manuscript, following the restoration process: Cotton MS Tiberius E VI.

All of this is extremely tragic, and the story is too detailed and complicated to tell in a single blogpost. Fortunately, the vast majority of the Cotton manuscripts survived the fire, many of them intact: the fate of others is described in an earlier account entitled Crisp as a Poppadom. But today, on 23 October, we should spare a moment to remember the beautiful and historic manuscripts damaged in the Cotton fire, the people who fought valiantly to rescue them, and those who restored them in the 19th century.

Julian Harrison

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The Strange Secret Behind the Tragic Deaths of Oscar Wilde's Half-Sisters

atlasobscura.com

The fiery 1871 fate of the famous author's family was successfully hushed up for years.

by Mariana Zapata
October 21, 2016



As a literary genius and master of wit, Oscar Wilde has fascinated the world since he first started writing. There is one area of his life, however, which remained in obscurity until the 1940s, and which continues to be a mystery: The horrifying death of his half-sisters.

The existence of Emily and Mary Wilde, the illegitimate daughters of Sir William Wilde, was kept hidden from most of the world. However, they still enjoyed considerable social standing and were often invited to events by Ireland's high society.

On October 31st 1871, the sisters were enjoying themselves at one such event. The Hallowe'en party



was hosted by a man named Andrew Reid at the Drumacon House in Ireland. Everything was a success right until the end of the party when the host asked one of the sisters—most likely Mary—to one last dance around the ballroom. In a dark twist of fate that turned a night of joy into a tragedy, Mary got too close to the candlesticks and her dress caught on fire.

Panic ensued. The remaining guests screamed in wild terror as Emily dashed to her sister in an attempt to put out the fire. The attempt did not only prove futile, but also deadly, as Emily's dress also caught on fire.

Here, accounts vary. Some say that Reid put his coat around the sisters and pushed them down the stairs, then made them roll around in the snow until the fire was out. In other accounts, he carried the sisters outside to the snow, and yet in others, they fled down the stairs themselves and rolled onto the dirt (which is much more feasible than there being snow in November). The facts remain that the fire was put out, but not before both sisters had acquired third degree burns in large portions of their bodies.

After the incident, the sisters endured prolonged extreme physical and psychological pain. Little could be done to save their lives, but their injuries took weeks to bring about their inevitable death. Mary died on November 9th and Emily on November 21st.

Now, if the story had died there, it would have merely been a gruesome tale of an unfortunate incident. But the accident was hushed and kept in obscurity for around 70 years, covering it with an irresistible shroud of mystery.

There was only a small death notice on the *Northern Standard* in its November 25th, 1871 edition:

DIED

At Drumaconnor, on the 8th inst. Mary Wilde

At Drumaconnor, on the 21st inst. Emma Wilde

Such a tiny notice was not customary for well-to-do families of the time, but its discreteness succeeded in not drawing attention to the events.

When it comes to investigating the case, however, one detail does draw attention—the change of Emily's name to Emma. One could probably chalk this up to a simple mistake if the names of the sisters weren't repeatedly changed on other official records.

Luckily, some dedicated scholars and authors have investigated the matter. In her book *Wildefire*, written in 2002, Heather White details the life and death of the sisters. Her investigation organized the scattered accounts of the events.

A year later, Theo McMahon shed more light onto the tragedy in his 2003 report for *Clogher Record*. In it, he provides details of the coroner's report on both deaths, revealing that their last names had been changed to Wylie. Their first name was not just changed, but completely omitted, as they are simply called Miss M Wylie and Miss L Wylie. One could guess that the M refers to *M*ary and the L refers to Emi*l*y. However, the report would then contradict the death notice and parish records, which list Mary as having died first. On the coroner's report, Miss M Wylie died on November 22 (another contradiction) from injuries sustained from helping her sister, so this had to be Emily.

The real question is, why would the coroner willingly change facts in two official reports? And why would an official report not require the first name of a victim? The answer, it seems, lies on Sir William Wilde himself. As a prominent doctor with a reputation to upkeep, he did not want the news of his illegitimate children and their ghastly death to spread.

We do not even know whether Oscar Wilde ever knew of his sisters' existence. What we do know, however, is that Sir William Wilde wrote a note to the constable to ask him not to tell Emily of her sister's death, so as to not aggravate her already fragile state. He also convinced him not to make an inquest on to the affair, and merely make an inquiry—a shorter investigation that required no witness statements. It could be stipulated, then, that he might have also asked the constable to change both of the names, as well as his own.

It seems as Sir William's efforts to keep the affair private—even from his family—were worth it, given the obscurity which shrouded the events for decades. The next mention we find of the incident is in T.G. Wilson's biography of William Wilde published in 1942. In it, there are details of a 1921 letter by J.B Yeats, W.B Yeat's father. He knew of the incident because he had once been told the story by an old friend.

The tragedy had by then become part of the oral history of Dublin society, and had evolved into multiple accounts. Add this to Sir William's active efforts to confuse information, and it is no wonder that so much of the story is elusive and contradictory.

To bring even more intrigue into the story, several accounts claim that for years after Mary and Emily's death, a mysterious woman cloaked in black would visit their graves. No one ever knew who she was, and she would disclose nothing except her being intimately close to the victims. This mysterious woman in black also appears on Oscar Wilde's personal writings as the enigmatic figure who visited his father on his deathbed. This elusive piece in the puzzle may or may not be an embellishment of oral history.

We may never have the small details right, but by bringing the story to light, people seem to think, we honor the sisters in their death. Perhaps this is why years later an epitaph was erected at the graveyard of St. Molua's church in Drumsnat in their honor. It reads:

In Memory of

Two loving and beloved Sisters

EMILY WILDE aged 24

and

MARY WILDE aged 22

who lost their lives by accident

in this parish in Nov 1871.

They were lovely and pleasant in

their lives and in their death they

were not divided

(II Samuel Chap. I, v 23)

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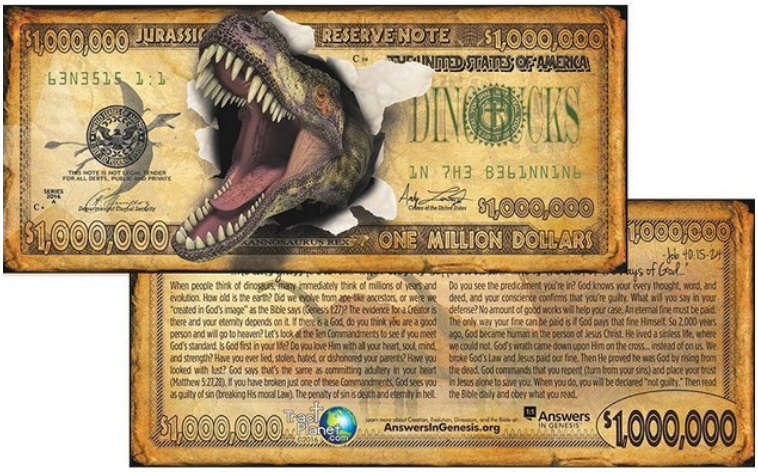
Christian Group Wants You To Tell Trick-Or-Treaters They're Going To Hell

huffingtonpost.com

Creationist Group Wants You To Tell Trick-Or-Treaters They're Going To Hell

How to have the absolute worst house on Halloween.

10/04/2016 05:07 am ET
Ed MazzaOvernight Editor



These fake $1 million bills warn of all the different things that could send you to Hell — and one evangelical group wants you to give them out to trick-or-treaters on Halloween.

Answers In Genesis

Anti-Halloween creationists have some ideas about the holiday that could turn your home into the least popular trick-or-treat stop in the neighborhood.

Instead of handing out candy, Answers in Genesis wants you to give trick-or-treaters fake $1 million bills that warn children of the fiery hell that awaits them.

“Have you ever lied, stolen or used God’s name in vain?” reads part of a fake bill with Noah’s Ark on the front. “The penalty for your crimes against God is death and eternal hell.”

A bill featuring a picture of a dinosaur is just as pleasant.

“Have you ever lied, stolen, hated or dishonored your parents? Have you looked with lust? God says that’s the same as committing adultery in your heart,” a message on the bill reads as it describes the Ten Commandments.

And if you’ve broken any of these rules, you’re doomed: “The penalty of sin is death and eternity in hell.”

Don’t try to hide, either, because “God knows your every thought, word and deed and your conscience confirms that you’re guilty.”

Along with selling packs of the Hell Money, Answers in Genesis is also hawking a “Halloween Learn and Share Kit” which contains both sets of bills, a DVD with an anti-Halloween lecture and an anti-Halloween book that appears to be a printed version of an essay from the evangelical Christian organization’s website.

According to the essay, Halloween has “evil intent,” “considerable paganism” and “the glorification of sensuality, death and demons.” The group urges churches to host social functions on October 31 to prevent kids from celebrating.

“If a Christian alternative is not possible in your location, then take advantage of this opportunity to share with people the message of the gospel and how Jesus Christ has conquered death and the forgiveness that can only be found in God when you greet ‘trick or treaters,’” the essays reads.

(h/t Secular Voices)

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'You're fired' - Trump effigy feels the heat on UK bonfire night

yahoo.com

'You're fired' - Trump effigy feels the heat on UK bonfire night

REUTERS

Reuters

ReutersNovember 5, 2016



An effigy of U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump stands waiting to be burnt as part of bonfire night celebrations in Edenbridge, Britain November 5, 2016. REUTERS/Neil Hall

LONDON (Reuters) - He turned "You're fired" into his reality show catch-phrase, but it was Donald Trump who went up in flames on Saturday - or at least an effigy of him did, as part of Britain's annual Bonfire Night celebrations.

An 11-metre-high (36 feet) model of the Republican U.S. presidential candidate was burned at a fireworks display in the town of Edenbridge, 30 miles (50 km) south of London.

The sculpture showed Trump, complete with his trademark mop of hair, holding his Democratic rival for the White House, Hilary Clinton, in a headlock, and sporting a pair of Mexico-themed boxer shorts.

"I think he would be quietly amused," artist Frank Shepherd said of his muse.

Britain celebrates the failed attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605 by letting off fireworks and lighting bonfires with an effigy of the "Gunpowder Plot" leader Guy Fawkes on top.

The celebrations in Edenbridge also feature effigies of unpopular celebrities and in the past have included former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, former Prime Minister Tony Blair, deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and disgraced American cyclist Lance Armstrong.

Other contenders for this year's choice included Philip Green, the billionaire former owner of failed retail chain BHS who is under pressure to resolve the firm's pension problems, and Sam Allardyce who quit as England soccer manager in September, after one game in charge, after a newspaper sting.

Effigies of Trump, including one of him sitting atop a Mexican border control wall, were also due to go up in smoke on Saturday at a fireworks display in the town of Lewes, 60 miles south of London.

(Writing by William Schomberg; Editing by Robin Pomeroy)

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Michigan Tech Industrial Archaeologist Helps Illinois Historians Try to Locate Haymarket Riot Time Capsule mtu.edu

Michigan Tech

Michigan Technological University



Tim Scarlett, foreground; Bleue Benton, Illinois Labor History Society, seated; Bartosz A. Dajnowski, vice director, Conversation Studio of Objects and Sculpture; Rebecca Howell, Lake Forest College. Photo by Rebecca Graff

Michigan Tech Industrial Archaeologist Helps Illinois Historians Try to Locate Haymarket Riot Time Capsule

By Jennifer Donovan | *Published October 17, 2016*

It all began with the labor movement's fight for an 8-hour work day.

In Chicago's Haymarket Square in 1886, a peaceful demonstration turned deadly when a bomb was thrown. In the chaos that followed, panicked police started shooting indiscriminately, killing seven of their own officers and at least four workers. In the wake of the Haymarket Riot, eight members of the labor movement were arrested. After a questionable trial, seven of the leaders were sentenced to hang. Two sentences were commuted by the governor, and one defendant committed suicide in jail, while four men were hung. While the public outrage at the violence created a "red scare" in the United States that set back the cause of the eight-hour day, the martyring of innocent labor leaders galvanized union organizers around the world. May Day celebrations around the world still commemorate those executed because of Haymarket.

Now, 130 years later, 21st century technology and a group of determined historians and archaeologists are bringing the historic Haymarket Affair back into people's awareness. And Michigan Technological University industrial archaeologist Tim Scarlett is playing a small part.

Time Capsule Captures Haymarket Affair

In 1892, leaders began erecting a monument to the Haymarket martyrs at their graves in Forest Home Cemetery in Forest Park, a suburb of Chicago. Before the monument was raised the following year, they buried a time capsule under the cornerstone, containing letters written by the martyrs themselves, family photos, newspaper articles printed at the time and documents from labor unions.

As decades and generations passed, the time capsule was forgotten.

Its existence resurfaced about three years ago, when a labor historian and a research librarian came across a Chicago Tribune article dated Nov. 7, 1892. The newspaper article chronicles the time capsule that was ceremoniously buried under the cornerstone of the monument. A researcher contacted Rebecca Graff, then Visiting Assistant Professor in Michigan Tech's Social Sciences Department, about the time capsule, but Graff, who was expecting her first child at the time, put her curiosity on hold.

Three years passed. Graff moved back to the Chicago area as an Assistant Professor at Lake Forest College, and when Illinois Labor History Society historian Mark Rogovin asked her to take charge of the archaeological work of retrieving the time capsule, she was thrilled.

"I was in the area, and I had the resources and students to finally do this work," she says. "It was impossible to say no to Haymarket and to these wonderful labor historians."

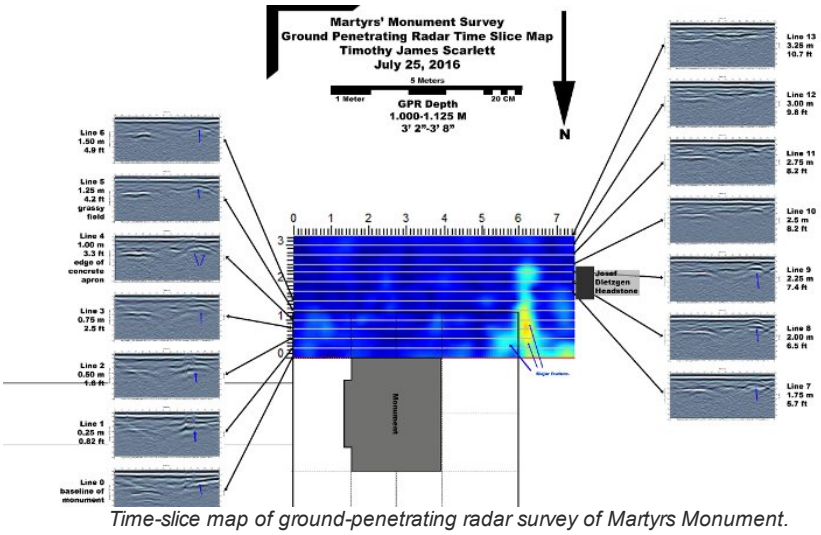
Graff knew her Michigan Tech colleague Tim Scarlett's passion for labor history and the use of technology in archaeological investigations, so she reached out to him. Scarlett promptly agreed to bring Tech's ground-penetrating radar (GPR) to Haymarket Martyrs' Monument to see if he could help locate the time capsule.

Ground-Penetrating Radar

Ground-penetrating radar is a standard tool in geophysics and archaeogeophysics, a tool that permits non-invasive mapping of things below the surface of the ground. Archaeologists use the device to find large objects as well as locate and map soil disturbances. The device uses a pair of antennas, Scarlett explains. One antenna emits short bursts of energy in the form of radio waves similar to microwaves. The waves pass through matter in the ground and either reflect, refract, or scatter and dissipate.

Many materials cause the energy to bounce back to the receiver antenna, Scarlett continued. When the energy hits an object, like an iron pipe or a foundation of brick or stone, the object reflects a great deal of energy. If, in the past, a person, animal or natural process disturbed the soil layers in one spot, the radar reflection there will change. "So it is possible to use ground-penetrating radar to 'see' things like pits, burials, hidden stream channels, faults and earthen features," says Scarlett.

Along with the strength of the returned signal, the GPR receiver records the sliver of time between the emitted and reflected "pings." The software uses the speed which the energy moves through different materials to calculate how far below the surface a particular object might be located.



Time-slice map of ground-penetrating radar survey of Martyrs Monument.

Time-slice map of ground-penetrating radar survey of Martyrs Monument.

Scarlett has worked in the past with Jeremy Shannon and Charles Young, both faculty in Michigan Tech's Department of Geological and Mining Engineering and Sciences. "We've used this technology, along with other remote sensing techniques, at industrial heritage sites like the Keweenaw's Cliff Mine and the Quincy Smelter, New York's West Point Foundry and pottery kiln sites in Utah.

The value of remote sensing technologies like ground-penetrating radar is enormous. "Archaeology is very, very expensive in time and labor," Scarlett says. "Fieldwork costs a lot of money. Any technology that can help us learn without digging, or when we must dig, by making our work as effective as absolutely possible, makes great contributions to the field."

Archaeologists and geophysicists also often use GPR to try and find graves in historic cemeteries, sometimes because those graves must be removed or the current caretakers don't know exactly where the burials all are located. "Technology like this is also incredibly important when you want to avoid disturbing things," Scarlett added.

The summer's GPR survey identified many "targets," most of which looked more like burials than time capsules. This October, community volunteers and students from Lake Forest College and DePaul University tested a likely target but found it was an old water pipe. Working in an adjoining area, they then unearthed something promising that hadn't appeared to the GPR, but X-rays of the container showed it was not the time capsule after all.

The search will go on. The Illinois Labor History Society and everyone else who has been involved in the project still want to know what the people who lived through the Haymarket Affair had to say to future

generations. As Jane Baxter, a collaborating archaeologist from DePaul, put it: “The people who placed this capsule were thinking of us."

And Graff, Baxter, and Scarlett stand ready to pitch in again if the society needs help

Michigan Technological University (www.mtu.edu) is a leading public research university developing new technologies and preparing students to create the future for a prosperous and sustainable world. Michigan Tech offers more than 120 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in engineering; forest resources; computing; technology; business; economics; natural, physical and environmental sciences; arts; humanities; and social sciences.

Last Modified 1:13 PM, October 17, 2016

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VIDEO: Tutu-wearing man breaks into Tampa Farmers Market

abcactionnews.com

Sean O'Reilly
8:52 AM, Nov 2, 2016



Police are looking for a tutu wearing man who broke into the Farmers Market with another man and ate fruit and drank soda in Tampa

TAMPA, Fla. - Hillsborough County detectives are searching for two men who burglarized the Tampa Farmers Market early Tuesday morning.



The Sheriff's office believes one of the men may have still been dressed for Halloween as he was wearing a tutu, a wig and possibly a cheerleading costume. The second man was wearing a hoodie with an image of an owl on the front.

Deputies say around 1:00 a.m. the men broke the glass door to the Farmers Market, which is located at 1718 Fletcher Avenue East in Tampa. Once inside, the two men ate fruit and drank soda.

Anyone with information where deputies could find the men seen in the video is asked to call the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office at (813) 247-8200.

You can also leave an anonymous tip and be eligible for a cash reward by calling Crime Stoppers at (800) 873-8477 or filing a report at www.crimestopperstb.com .

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Cellular bone scans of those tiny Tyrannosaurus Rex arms show them to be little used, researchers say

| *October 14, 2016* | *Last Updated: Oct 14 11:36 AM ET* nationalpost.com



M. Spencer Green / APThis May 17, 2000 file photo shows Sue, the largest and most complete Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton ever found, on public display at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

CHICAGO — It turns out The Field Museum's Tyrannosaurus Rex Sue didn't use those tiny arms very much.

At least that's the initial conclusion from a detailed look at the fossil's right forelimb at the Argonne National Laboratory outside Chicago. Researchers there used a scan to generate a 3-D image of the arm bones down to the cellular level.

Final results will take months or years.

Pete Makovicky is associate curator of dinosaurs at the Chicago museum. He said Thursday there "aren't many signs of stress on the bones that would indicate frequent use."

But, he adds, there's still a lot to learn.

Precisely why Tyrannosaurus Rex had forelimbs is one of the enduring mysteries of dinosaur palaeontology. The Field says it will share the results of the study when they're available.

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Uganda's most unusual looking man finally gets diagnosis

October 27th , 2016

sundayworld.com

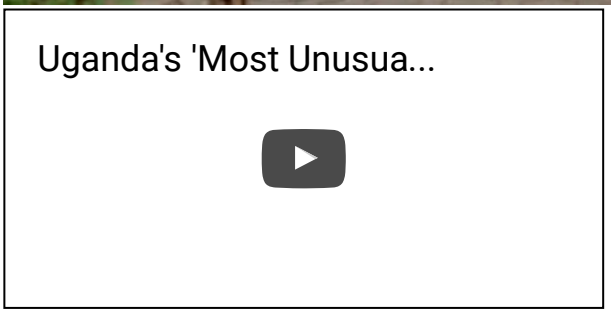
AFTER winning an event to find Uganda's most unusual looking man, Godfrey Baguma was thrust into the limelight for his severely deformed head.

The 47-year-old cobbler from Kyanzana, Uganda, became a local celebrity for his unique looks, which lead him to have a career in African pop music.



But the singer's mystery condition had never been diagnosed - and he was always fearful he may have passed it on to his eight children.

He said: Right now I am afraid because I have a little daughter who kind of resembles me. I look at her head and I believe that she might look like me.



"Sometimes I worry because my children are still very young. I worry about what would happen to them if I died. I think about that a lot now."

And with Godfrey's health recently declining Doctor Tony Wilson – the head of medicine at Mbarara Hospital – decided to carry out tests to diagnose him.

Doctor Wilson said: "He has very widespread abnormality in his head and pressing on various parts of his brain.

"His posture is compressing his chest – this is why he's not breathing well."

Six weeks after an MRI scan with Doctor Wilson, Godfrey received the full examination he had always hoped for.

He suffers from a rare condition called Fibrodysplasia – which affects the growth and placement of his cells and tissue.

With the correct medication, Godfrey's health can be managed and better still – he cannot pass the disease down to his children.





He said: I was so worried that the doctor wanted to operate on me. I feel glad that he just told me about my condition.

"I feel so good and I have learned that I am a human being."

With a difficult start in life, this was music to Godfrey's ears.

He said: "When I was born my mother looked at me and said that I was not a normal child and she left me. Thankfully my grandmother took care of me.

"I was scared to go out and mix with people. People would say I wasn't a human being, that I looked like a strange creature.

"But now I have to accept how I look."

Godfrey noticed the abnormal swelling to his cheek when he was just 10 years old and has always wondered what caused his problems in the first place.

Despite facing endless taunts about his face when growing up, Godfrey has formed a successful career as a pop star in Uganda with his music videos racking up 3,000,000 views on YouTube.



He said: "I was mending my shoes and a man who worked in entertainment asked me to take part in a show.

"Now I've got friends. People call me to go to their shows and give me money.

"It helps me take care of my children."

Godfrey had two children with his first wife and unfortunately this marriage did not end happily.

But eight years ago, he was lucky enough to meet the love of his life, Namande Kate, and has had a further six children with her.

Namande said: "Godfrey's not handsome on the outside, but he has a good heart.





“I wish people would see him the way I see him.”

Godfrey’s story is featured in Body Bizarre this Thursday, October 27th, 10pm, on TLC.

SundayWorldAn INM website

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UMaine professor dies conducting research in Antarctica

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press October 23, 2016

ORONO, Maine (AP) — A University of Maine professor has died while conducting research in Antarctica.

The university says 50-year-old Gordon Hamilton died Saturday when the snowmobile he was riding hit a crevasse and he fell 100 feet. He had been in Antarctica doing research for the National Science Foundation. His work focused on the role of ice and glaciers in the climate system.

Hamilton began working at the University of Maine's Climate Change Institute in 2000. He served as an assistant research professor, taught undergraduate and graduate courses and worked with a statewide initiative on science, technology, engineering and math programs for high school students.

UMaine provost Jeffery Hecker released a statement calling Hamilton a "quintessential scientist and educator" and a "pioneer researcher" who touched and changed many lives.

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Unconscious Ventriloquism: The Unsolved Mystery of the Zaragoza Goblin

atlasobscura.com

by Eric Grundhauser
June 23, 2015



DUENDES! (Photo: Wikipedia)

The supernatural often seems to get a short shrift from government authorities, but that isn't always the case. Or, at least, once, this wasn't the case, because in 1930s Spain, the police, the military, and the international press were all summoned in response to the supposed voice of a goblin living in a residential stove.

The strange incident in Zaragoza, Spain in September of 1934 was finally blamed on "unconscious ventriloquism," leaving one (probably) innocent woman slandered, and an entire city confused. (We scoured the almost daily reports from the 1934 *London Times* for the story.)

The madness began on September 27th, 1934 in the second floor home of the Palazón family, who lived in an apartment building on what was then known as Gascón Gotor street. It was on that date that the family first began hearing strange screams, laughter, and voices that seemed to come from the walls of their kitchen, specifically from their stove or its chimney. The chimney connected to many other units in the building before escaping to the roof, so the logic was that it must have been coming from someone in the building. The roof itself was taller than any around it and too isolated to access easily.

The voice, male, did not seem to just be in the heads of the Palazón family either. When the Palazóns asked their their neighbors for help, they too would hear the voice when they came to the apartment, and word started to spread about the peculiar haunting on Gascón Gotor.



A young girl, possibly Pascuala Alcocer, poses with the chimney where the voice was said to emanate from. (Screencap by ANINBOXING on Youtube)

While most believed that the sounds were some kind of prank, both the practical observers and those who truly believed that the voice was of supernatural origin started thinking of the presence as a *duende*. The

term *duende* translates roughly to “elf” or “goblin.” The beings come from Latin American folklore, and are analogous to fairies, sprites, or, well, goblins, in Western folklore. They are natural spirits that can have a range of traits or significance ranging from being benevolent pixies to mischievous boggarts depending on the tale. As it would turn out, the Zaragoza Duende was closer to the latter.

With the whole building aware of the voice coming from the supposed stove goblin, local interest in the house began to grow. Curious onlookers would crowd around outside the house to try and catch a snippet of the spirit’s conversation, and the befuddled Palazón family did not know what to do. In the month since the voice had begun appearing, it was said to both ask and answer questions, and took a particular interest in the Palazón’s young maid, Pascuala Alcocer. The voice would call out her name and and laugh maniacally.

Finally, with the family unable to root out the source of the disturbance or cope with its presence any longer, the Palazóns went to the police for help in mid-November of 1934. It is unknown whether the police would have gotten involved had local interest in the Zaragoza elf not been beginning to take on a tenor of hysteria. But with the authorities involved, the mystery voice became more popular than ever, and the crowds grew by the hundreds while the police investigated.



Throngs of people crowd around outside the apartment hoping to hear from the goblin. (Screencap from Planetamisterio on Youtube)

The befuddled police began investigating the stove, but their presence did not seem to faze the phantom. Officers would ask it questions it would unerringly answer. In their first piece on the Zaragoza goblin (titled *A Polite Spanish Ghost,* The Times would refer to the voice as the “Saragossa Ghost”), published in their November 24th, 1934 edition, the *London Times* reported that an “architect and some workmen” were then sent into the building to get to the bottom of the shameless voice. They searched every room from the cellar on up, but could find no evidence of a prankster or even where they might have hid. As one of the workers stood in front of the goblin stove, and said that the chimney opening should be measured, it was reported that the voice said simply, “You need not trouble, the diameter is just 6 inches.” Turns out the goblin was correct.

With still no answers as to the where the damn goblin could be, the building was completely evacuated and a team of police and volunteers began guarding the building morning and night, keeping a 30-yard perimeter around the home so that whatever mischief maker was behind the voice could not return. Doctors and psychologists were brought in, as well as a priest who sprinkled the stove with holy water. According to *The Times*, the voice spoke “incessantly.” Haunted sightseeing trips from nearby Bilbao began organizing, as answers grew more and more elusive.

An investigator inspects the talking chimney hole. (Photo: Zaragoza.es)



Then suddenly, the voice went quiet. After two days of silence from the goblin, the local magistrate, who was eager to restore logic and order to the city, deemed the case to simply be an anomaly and the police withdrew. However, things were far from over.

Just two days after it had stopped all communication, the voice surprised a group of neighbors and visitors by suddenly exclaiming, “Cowards, cowards, cowards, here I am.” And just like that, the goblin was back. The police returned, but the Palazón family had had enough, and moved away from Zaragoza. The voice would taunt police, saying, “I am coming, I am coming.” (Although nothing ever appeared.)

Interest in the Zaragoza goblin was reaching a fever pitch. A Barcelona radio station tried to get someone to put a microphone in the room so they could broadcast the voice, and members of Scotland Yard were planning trips out to the apartment to try and solve the case. By November 30th, the Governor of Zaragoza had had enough, and called an end to all of the goblinoid silliness, asking the people to essentially settle down, and help find out who the prankster was.

Of course just saying a thing and making it true are not the same thing, so the governor took matters into his own hands.

On December 4th, the governor issued a statement that the perpetrator of the voice was none other than the young maid, Pascuala Alcocer, who he said had been performing the voice via something he called, “unconscious ventriloquism.” Understandably, Alcocer herself claimed to be completely unaware that she was apparently throwing her voice while in some sort of fugue state. The official who had been presiding over the investigations claimed to have seen it himself, vaguely explaining that it was the result of “a psychic phenomenon produced only in certain circumstances.”



The Edificio Duende today. (Photo: Google Maps)

Of course arguments were made that the young girl was nowhere near the premises when most of the strange talking occurred, but for the city officials, the matter was at an end and they were happy to move on. Now fingered as the perpetrator of the fraud, but with no evidence to arrest her (and really no interest in doing so), Alcocer was allowed to return to her hometown to get away from the judging eyes of those in Zaragoza.

The building eventually went back to relative normal. Although future tenants would still report ghostly sounds, it seemed that the goblin had left the building.

No culprit or explanation was ever settled on for who exactly was behind the elaborate Zaragoza goblin hoax, and the city seemed happy to try to forget the whole incident. Yet not all reminder of the goblin was erased. The original apartment building that held the goblin stove was demolished in

1977, but the new building that stands in its place still bears the name “Edificio Duende,” or “Goblin Building.”

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Unearthing "La Pila", A Remnant of A Bygone Hispanic Neighborhood

kwbu.org

By Carlos E. Morales • Nov 11, 2016

Heart of Texas Public Radio

KWBU logo



Located in the middle of this aerial photo, "La Pila" is just off the banks of the Brazos. Its circular foundation visible.

- Located in the middle of this aerial photo, "La Pila" is just off the banks of the Brazos. Its circular foundation visible.

In Waco during the 1900s pockets of Hispanic communities lived in neighborhoods with names like Sandtown, White City and Calle Dos. These areas were eventually demolished and are now memories of the town's early days. But there has been a recent effort to unearth a remaining vestige of one of these communities.

At the corner of Jefferson Avenue and University Parks Drive, volunteers use trowels to chip away at the ground beneath .They're slowly unearthing a spring-fed water fountain known as "La Pila."

"It was a beautiful fountain, but not as ornate as some of the other ones," Alice Rodriguez says, remembering childhood days playing at "La Pila" – a wide, rounded concrete fountain with a bowl on top where water would flow.

"The water there, I remember the water being cold, because my cousins, pushed me in there," Rodriguez says, laughing. "We were playing and they pushed me in there."



La Pilla – Spanish for "the fountain" – was a gathering point for Calle Dos, an early 20th century neighborhood in Waco that was home to Mexican Immigrants. Others from around the city would go there too. But, in the 50s, La Pila was plugged and covered up. In fact, the entire Calle Dos neighborhood and similar districts – were bulldozed as part of The Waco Urban Renewal Project in 1958.

Louis Gaytan-Garcia – who has worked to dig out the fountain – says it could've been saved.

"You know they could've kept this thing. They didn't have to knock it down like they did. They just wiped it out," Garcia says, looking at a corner of the fountain that's visible. "It's actually broke around the edges right there, where the Caterpillar was trying to crawl up on top of it and you can see where he broke the edges of the concrete trying to pack this dirt."

A year ago, when the unearthing project was getting started, Garcia was told he needed to secure antiquities permits from the Texas Historical Commission. That's where Katherine Turner-Pearson comes in. She's the principal investigating archeologist overseeing the project.

She believes excavating "La Pila" will help bring back the memories of this neighborhood.

"I think of it as the archeology of the memories, and get those down now. They will be lost forever," Turner-Pearson says. "Even though I'm an archeologist, that to me is more important that the fountain itself, and that's really where we have to start working."

But unearthing the fountain will take time. La Pila is estimated to be some 4 to 5 feet under ground, and volunteers here are digging 10 centimeters deep at a time, says Annaliese Sonntag

"That's kind of why it takes so long too," she says, sweeping up dirt.

"I think of it as the archaeology of the memorie. Get those down now, they will be lost forever." - Katherine Turner-Pearson

Sonntag is from the Dallas area, but came to help. She says excavations like these are done slowly to make sure everything is exhumed evenly.

"Then you stop, do the paperwork, sift through everything. Take photos if there's anything photo worthy. When we get down to this part of the fountain, to the rim, we'll definitely take a photo. Then we'll start all over again and go deeper."

Once the fountain is dug out, Garcia has big ideas, like getting it restored and turned back into the meeting spot it once was.

He would also like a historical marker – he says – to remind people of the community that was once here.

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University executive director under fire for Bigfoot hunt

yahoo.com

Associated PressNovember 2, 2016

GALLUP, N.M. (AP) — The head of the University of New Mexico's Gallup campus is under fire for spending money on Bigfoot-related pursuits.

UNM Gallup's Executive Director Dr. Christopher Dyer organized a two-day, on-campus Bigfoot conference in February followed by a Bigfoot expedition, costing taxpayers more than $7,000, KRQE-TV reported (http://bit.ly/2e2e9g7).

"It was the largest and most well-attended event in the history of this campus," Dyer said.

UNM paid for advertising, meals for guest speakers, airfare and per diem. Self-professed Bigfoot expert Dr. Jeff Meldrum was paid a $1,000 honorarium plus expenses. The other guest speaker, Rob Kryder, was paid a $500 honorarium plus expenses.

Dyer is an avid Bigfoot hunter in his free time and says he only pursues the mythical creature when he isn't on the job. He has a collection of Bigfoot hairs and photos of suspicious footprints.

After the conference, Dyer and some of his companions went to the desert searching for Bigfoot. No students or faculty went on the expedition, but KRQE found UNM paid for the expedition. Dyer said he and his companions did not spot Bigfoot, but they did see habitat.

"I'd have to say it was pretty much a blown waste of money because we did not find evidence because of the snow. It was just impossible to get around out there. So in that case, yeah would we spend money on that again? Absolutely not," Dyer said.

Dyer said he uses discretionary funds for field work that he believes has some kind of merit, such as field work of some kind of research. "People use monies from the taxpayers to do research. For Bigfoot or whatever," Dyer said.

UNM President Robert Frank said he didn't know about the university's Bigfoot spending until reporters called about it.

"Dr. Dyer needs to be much more thoughtful about how he undertakes these activities," Frank said. "The type of expedition that just took place was not appropriate and will not occur in that manner again."

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Information from: KRQE-TV, http://www.krqe.com

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Unknown illness spreads from woman to deputies and hospital staff in Coos County

by KCBY Wednesday, October 12th 2016

kval.com

Unknown illness appeared to spread from woman to deputies, hospital staff

The Coos County Haz Mat Team responded to Bay Area Hospital and the residence on East Bay Road. The team cleared the emergency room and provided a protocal to the sheriff's office to decontaminate vehicles and equipment. (Coos County Sheriff's Office)

NORTH BEND, Ore. - Five people fell ill from an unknown hazardous material that appears to be spreading by contact and causing hallucinations, the Coos County Sheriff's Office said.

A hazmat team responded to both Bay Area Hospital and a home on East Bay Road as the symptoms spread from a woman to deputies, a person under the woman's care and a hospital employee, the sheriff's office said.

The Coos Bay Haz Mat Team has not yet identified the source, but it appears to be passing through contact, not the air, the sheriff's office said.

The situation started around 3 a.m. Wednesday.

Here is the account so far from the sheriff's office:

A 57-year-old woman reported someone vandalizing her vehicle around 3 a.m. outside the home where she works as a caregiver for a 78-year-old person on East Bay Road in North Bend.

A deputy checked the area and found nothing.

Deputies were called back to the home at 5:30 a.m. by a similar report.

This time, the deputies suspect the woman might be having medical issues causing hallucinations.

The woman was taken to Bay Area Hospital for examination. Medical personnel checked her, she appeared fine, and returned home.

Then one of the deputies began showing similar symptoms and had to be evaluated at the hospital.

Then the other deputy, the 78-year-old cared for by the initial patient, and a hospital employee started showing similar symptoms and had to be hospitalized.

The Coos County Haz Mat Team responded to Bay Area Hospital and the residence on East Bay Road. The team cleared the emergency room and provided a protocol to the sheriff's office to decontaminate vehicles and equipment.

"Officers and medical person are all responding well to current treatment," Sgt. Pat Downing wrote in a press release. "Nothing has been found in blood samples at this time. Repeat: source of contamination has not been identified. Investigation and processing is continuing."

As of late morning, the hazmat team was at the home on East Bay Road.

The team completed a check of the house around 1:30 p.m.

"No source of contaminate has been identified or found," Downing said in a press release.

"Initial investigations believed that a medication used in patch form may have been the source. Investigation has found that all those patches and potential medications that may have caused the symptoms have been accounted for," according to Downing. "No source of the contamination has been found. The vehicles, equipment and uniforms have been checked with no contaminates identified or located on or about them."

Everyone involved was treated and released from the hospital.

The hospital worker "as found to have been recently exposed to the flu and continues to display flu like symptoms and is being monitored," Downing wrote.

Investigation is ongoing.

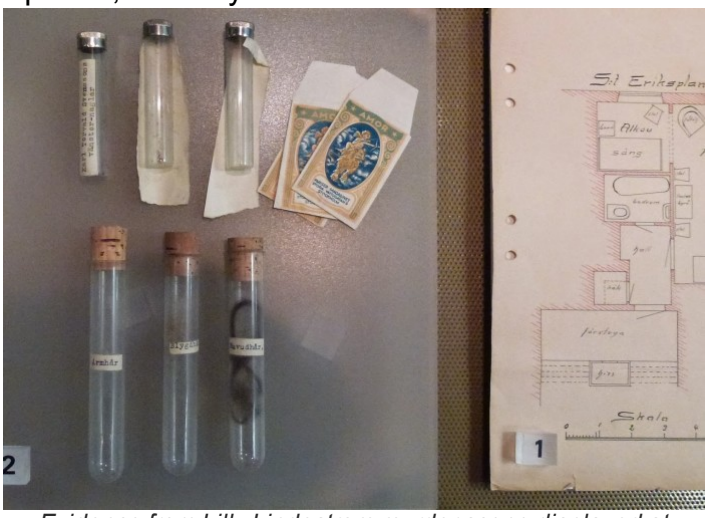
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Unsolved Mystery: Was Prostitute's 1932 Blood-Draining Murder The Work Of The 'Atlas Vampire'? - CrimeFeed

crimefeed.com

April 25, 2016 by Terri Osborne

CrimeFeed



Evidence from Lilly Lindestrom murder scene displayed at Stockhom Museum

Want a little dose of crime history on a case you may not have heard about before? Lilly Lindeström's brutal murder back in in 1932 remains unsolved to this day. Lindeström was known to have been a prostitute in Stockholm's Atlas neighborhood, and all evidence indicates that she entertained her clients in her dingy little apartment. On the evening of May 4, she reportedly paid a visit to a neighbor named Minnie, hoping to stock up on condoms (she was naked under a long coat at the time).

Minnie was the last person to see Lilly Lindeström alive.

When Minnie realized that Lindeström had never resurfaced after that night — and she wasn't answering her door — Minnie alerted police. Officers got into the apartment, and what they found remains a mystery over 80 years later. According to police reports, Lindeström was found face-down on her bed, and had been dead for about 2-3 days. She was naked. Her clothes were neatly folded on a nearby chair. A used condom found in her body suggested that she had engaged in sexual activity before her death.

Related: Investigating the Twin Brighton Trunk Murders

Authorities determined that Lindeström died from repeated blunt force trauma to the head. What surprised them, though, was the complete lack of blood in Lindeström's body; it had been entirely drained. They found saliva on Lindeström's neck, but reports do not mention any of the puncture wounds normally associated with vampire stories. A blood-stained gravy ladle was found nearby, and police believe that it was used to drink Lindeström's blood. Unfortunately, this was over 50 years before the advent of DNA testing, so there was no scientific way to match all of the bodily fluid evidence to any potential suspect.

Officers questioned the clients who regularly visited Lindeström, as well as conducting a thorough search of the neighborhood. They were unable to locate any suspects, and authorities have never filed charges in the case — which remains one of the creepiest unsolved murders in history.

Image: Evidence taken from the crime scene on display at the Stockholm Police Museum

This entry was posted in Crime History and tagged Atlas Vampire, crime history, Lilly Lindestrom, mystery, Stockholm, Sweden, vampire. Bookmark the permalink.

More from Investigation Discovery
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UPDATED: Clown scare alters Ali Ghan club's schedule

times-news.com



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UPDATED: Clown scare alters Ali Ghan club's schedule http://www.times-news.com/news/local_news/updated-clown-scare-alters-ali-ghan-club-s-schedule/article_5a16f202-83ed-11e6-87cb-ab647cecea66.html

OAKLAND - The current national paranoia about people in clown costumes isn't good and is giving legitimate clown units a black eye, according to an Oakland man who has been been clowning around since 2000.

"We don't intimidate or scare anybody," said Tom Holland, a member of the Ali Ghan Shrine Club's clown unit.

Holland said the group is backing out of a scheduled parade in Hagerstown and considering whether to participate in an upcoming Cumberland parade.

"With all this stuff going on we decided not to go to Hagerstown for a parade at night," Holland said.

Emmett Kelly and Red Skelton could never have imagined it would come to this. Bozo and Clarabell must be shaking their heads.

Some folks across the country are scared and calling local law enforcement agencies when they see a clown ... or think they see one.

For the past several weeks, clown complaints have popped up in a variety of places.

In South Carolina, there were concerns clowns were attempting to lure children.

On Monday in Kentucky, police arrested what was described as a man -- wearing a full clown mask and costume -- lurking and crouching in the woods near an apartment complex. He was charged with wearing a mask in a public place.

Paw Paw, West Virginia, Police Chief James F. Cummings decided to get ahead of the clown curve.

Cummings posted notices across town to alert folks who dress as clowns to expect to be arrested, but not before they get thumped ... by their neighbors.

Cummings got complaints from people who saw clowns, according to Town Clerk Tina Lewis. Cummings was not available for comment on Monday.

"Our thinking is that people had heard about the clowns in other areas and decided to dress up and be funny or scare someone," Lewis said. "The chief didn't want those kinds of shenanigans so he posted the notices around town at places where they would be seen such as the post office and stores."

The chief's notice is blunt and cites state law.

"It is plain stupid to do this," the notice reads. "If someone sees you dressed like this they have the right to defend themselves. It is not normal for clowns to be running around like idiots all year long.

"I will stand behind anyone who feels they need to protect themselves from these so-called clowns," the notice continues.

"So, to sum it all up, if you run around in a clown suit, you should probably expect for citizens to beat you (for their own protection), then get arrested by police," the notice concludes.

Cummings indicated on the notice that West Virginia code allows for the arrest of someone wearing a mask.

Meanwhile, Holland said the Ali Ghan clowns will parade in Kingwood, West Virginia, on Saturday for the Buckwheat Festival.

"That's a daytime parade and we feel better about that," Holland said. "But we are going to stick together as a group everywhere we go."

The club's clown van is based in Oakland, but members don makeup and costumes at home, then drive in their personal cars to reach the central gathering point.

That makes them vulnerable to sightings people can misconstrue as someone intending to do harm, according to Holland.

"That's not what we're all about," Holland said. "Sure, some kids get scared when they see us, so we don't push that. We just keep moving on and give them space."

Holland said he told other members of the clown group to give some thought about laying low for a while, although marching in the Autumn Glory Festival parade in Oakland is definitely still on the schedule.

"That's our home parade and it's during the day. We'll be there," Holland said.

There have been a couple recent clown incidents in Cumberland, according to Police Capt. Greg Leake.

On Saturday, officers encountered a man on River Avenue who was wearing a **clown mask** and throwing rocks onto the street.

On Sept. 20, officers were not able to locate a man who had been described as wearing a clown mask and beating a pipe against one hand at the corner of Park and Williams streets.

"I don't believe we have an issue on our hands here like I've heard about in other cities," Leake said.

Allegany County Sheriff Craig Robertson said he is not aware that any of his deputies have responded to complaints about clowns.

"I don't know of any law that would make it illegal to be dressed like a clown or wear a mask," Robertson said. "If that were the case it would be impossible to have trick or treat at Halloween."

Robertson said businesses such as banks and credit unions have their own regulations that prohibit entry of masked people, for obvious reasons.

Garrett County Sheriff Rob Corley said his staff has not dealt with any clown complaints.

Mike Sawyers is a staff writer and the outdoor editor at Cumberland Times-News. Call/text him at 301-268-0630, email msawyers@times-news.com and follow him on Twitter.

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‘Vampire Trucker’ Who Kept Women as Sex Slaves in His Semi-Trailer Gets 20 Years

people.com

By Dave Quinn•@NineDaves

Posted on November 11, 2016 at 4:35pm EST

Utah trucker Timothy Jay Vafeades kept six women as sex slaves in his semi-trailer — where he raped, abused, tormented, beat and imprisoned them while he traveled across the country.

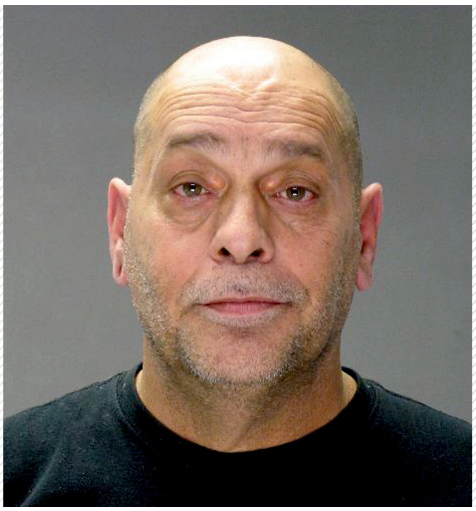
After being sentenced this week in federal court, he’ll spend 20 years in prison, according to multiple reports.

The 56-year-old previously pleaded guilty, in June, to two counts of transporting a person across state lines with intent to engage for illegal sexual activity and one count of transporting child pornography, *The Deseret News* reports.

On Wednesday, Vafeades was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Utah, according to the *News*. He was also ordered under a lifetime of court supervision after his release.

In court, Assistant U.S. Attorney Trina Higgins outlined a history of Vafeades’ abuse, *The Salt Lake Tribune* reports: He took the cell phones and identifications of six women and held them captive — forcing them to shower with him and sleep naked. They were forbidden from looking at other people, beaten repeatedly and sexually assaulted daily.

“I feel fortunate I can actually speak today,” one of Vefeades’ victims — known as Victim B — said at his sentencing hearing, according to the *Tribune*. “I was assaulted with a belt. He raped me.”



Clay County Jail via AP

Obsessed with vampires, Vafeades became known in the media as the “Vampire Trucker.” He nicknamed his truck the “Twilight Express” and often wore vampire fangs, the Associated Press reports. He took a power tool to one of his victim’s teeth to shape them into vampire fangs, according to court documents obtained by the AP.

At his hearing, Vafeades gave a brief, tearful apology, according to the *News*.

“I am sorry for my life,” he said. “I am sorry for not recognizing myself and what a monster I am.”

U.S. District Judge David Nuffer said Wednesday that the abuses the women suffered were some of the worst he’d ever come across, according to the AP.

Of Vafeades’ six victims, one was a relative. Another was beaten brutally when she wouldn’t marry him. The four others agreed to marriage out of fear of retribution, according to the *Tribune*.

His defense attorney, Vanessa Ramos, said Vefeades had suffered physical and verbal abuse himself. “I think it’s clear everyone involved in this case is damaged,” she said, *The Tribune* reports.

Ramos did not immediately respond to PEOPLE's request for comment on whether she will appeal the sentence.

Vafeades was arrested in November 2013 at a weigh station in Clay County, Minnesota, after officers noticed bruises on one of his victims' faces, according to the AP. His guilty plea involved two victims — an 18-year-old girl in 2012 and a 19-year-old girl in 2013 — but court documents allege his abuse began as far back as 1994.

Those cases were too old for criminal prosecution, authorities told the AP. Higgins said the plea deal both spared Vafeades' victims from having to testify and brought them closure.

Had Vafeades gone to trial, he would have faced a maximum of 25 years, Higgins told the AP.

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Obituary: Varjo Jurisoo, drafted by three armies, immigrated to U.S. startribune.com

By Chao Xiong Star Tribune
October 17, 2016 — 10:23pm


Varjo Jurisoo

Varjo Jurisoo wasn't one for words, especially not in the midst of his wife's large Midwestern Catholic family.

"He would just sit quietly in the corner and not talk," said his nephew, Daniel Hunt. "In my first 35 years, I heard him say two words."

Who could have guessed that the Estonian-born Jurisoo had been drafted into two foreign armies while still a teenager, guarded a notorious Nazi war criminal, and later fled alone to the United States where he picked oranges on what is now Disneyland property in order to pay for his overseas journey by ship?

"He definitely didn't talk much about his past," said his son, David Jurisoo, 54, of San Diego.

It was only later in life that Jurisoo began opening up about his made-for-the-movies trek from his home on an Estonian fox fur farm to the front lines of WWII to a prisoner-of-war camp to the American Midwest.

"He went through more in his first 25 years of life than I ever will in my whole life," said his son David Jurisoo.

Varjo Jurisoo, 91, of Coon Rapids, died Oct. 8 after a long battle with cancer.

It would be the last fight for the RV-loving, former theater actor who was forced to volley bullets across the Neva River alongside the German army during WWII as his older brother, Uno Jurisoo, unbeknown to him, was firing back on behalf of the Russians. Both had been conscripted.

Jurisoo, who was also known as "Joe," had first been drafted by the Russians at the age of 16, but dodged that only to be drafted by the Germans at age 19 in 1943. He was injured by gunfire during the war, but recovered and returned to battle. He would never see his father again. Political tensions and safety concerns kept him from visiting his mother or brother until he returned to Estonia in 1991, which is when they learned that the brothers had fought on opposing sides.

"He never complained about it," David Jurisoo noted. "It's not like he thought, 'My life's unfair.' "

Jurisoo and other Estonian soldiers fighting for Germany eventually surrendered to U.S. troops and spent a year in a Belgian prisoner-of-war camp. Soon after his release, he was hired as a guard at the Palace of Justice, where he helped guard Rudolf Hess and other war criminals during the Nuremberg trials.

Unable to return home for fear of persecution, Jurisoo immigrated to the United States in the late 1940s, landing in Anaheim, Calif. He picked oranges and was given supervisory duties because of his fluency with the languages spoken by the refugee workers. But it wasn't long before he was drafted yet a third time — by the U.S. Army for the Korean War, for which he served in Europe.

When Jurisoo returned to the United States, he bounced around Chicago, North Dakota and Minneapolis, where he acted in local theater productions, before returning to Chicago. It was there at age 35 that he met his wife, Margaret Hunt, in 1959.

They married in 1960 and raised two sons in Brookfield, Ill., while Jurisoo worked as a trucking firm auditor. “After he got married, he had a pretty normal life,” said David Jurisoo. “No drama after that.”

The family moved to Coon Rapids in the 1970s for a job transfer. . In his later years, Jurisoo returned to a hobby he had picked up in the prisoner camp: wood carving. He carved intricate figurines and gave them out as gifts.

He and his wife became active travelers, driving across the country in their RV during the winter, favoring their sons’ homes in California and Alabama, along with New Mexico.

Jurisoo was active in the Good Sam RV Club and ran its website for several years.He and Margaret were quite involved with the group’s Minnesota committee, and befriended many other travelers.

“It always strikes me as remarkable that a guy who had to go through so much at such a young age was not only so normal, but so engaged with the people around him,” said Hunt. “I think he was like, ‘Well, that’s kind of how life goes.’ ”

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The Vatican Just Banned Scattering Ashes

smithsonianmag.com



A Pearl Harbor Survivor Liaison scatters the ashes of Ed Chappell, who requested that his remains be scattered where his fallen shipmates died in 1941. Expert Infantry - Flickr/Creative Commons)

By Erin Blakemore
smithsonian.com
October 25, 2016 3:19PM

When people die, they often instruct their loved ones to scatter their ashes in some beloved place. And survivors sometimes opt to place dear old mom or dad's remains on top of the family mantel or in some other display rather than bury them. But for Catholics, those practices could abruptly go out of style. As Harriet Sherwood reports for *The Guardian*, the Vatican has ruled that ashes can only be stored in sacred places such as cemeteries.

According to new instructions just announced by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, a Vatican body devoted to clarifying Catholic doctrine, Roman Catholics should bury ashes in "cemeteries or other sacred places." The document states that "the conservation of the ashes of the departed in a domestic residence is not permitted" and can be permitted only in extraordinary circumstances. The ban includes the scattering of ashes and the division of ashes among family members and states that descendants who have requested that their ashes be cremated must be denied Christian funerals.

Sherwood reports that Cardinal Gerhard Müller, who leads the Congregation, said that burial is preferable to cremation and that dispersing ashes in the air will not be allowed "in order to avoid any form of pantheistic or naturalistic or nihilistic misunderstanding."

According to the National Funeral Directors Association, a group of funeral industry professionals, cremation rates have grown in recent years. In 2015, they projected it would surpass the rate of burial, reaching 48.5 percent compared with 45.4 percent of burials. The group projects that by 2030, 71.1 percent of people will be cremated instead of buried. Part of that increase is due to environmental concerns about burial, which not only takes up precious space, but spews embalming fluid into the ground and impacts the environment through everything from fertilizer to water usage at burial sites. Others simply prefer cremation to burial for reasons that range from its reduced cost to the power it gives to families to determine where an how to dispose of the deceased person's remains.

As the Cremation Association of North America told *TIME's* Bess Lovejoy in 2013, approximately a third of people who receive "cremains," or cremated remains, keep the remains. Another third scatter them, and the remaining third buries them. Scattering ashes is subject to a number of laws depending on the method of scattering—for those who wish to have a burial at sea, for example, the Environmental Protection Agency requires a permit.

Church rules actually haven't permitted Catholics to cremate their dead for that long—the regulation that allowed for cremation of human remains only became doctrine in 1963. In 2012, Jim Graves reported for *Catholic World Report* that more and more Catholic families are opting for cremation. Will that change with the new law? Will Catholics even follow the doctrine? That remains to be seen. But given the Church's intention to deny a Christian funeral to families who wish to hold on to the remains of their loved ones, the doctrinal shift—which even appears to prohibit the time-honored tradition of burial at sea for members of the U.S. Navy—may prompt a sea change in how Roman Catholics commemorate the lives of their loved ones.

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THE VEGETABLE LAMB OF TARTARY - HALF PLANT, HALF ANIMAL, WHOLLY AMAZING!

blogspot.co.uk



Dr KARL SHUKER

Friday, 4 November 2016

THE VEGETABLE LAMB OF TARTARY - HALF PLANT, HALF ANIMAL, WHOLLY AMAZING!



Vegetable lamb, Friedrich Johann Justin Bertuch, 1806 (public domain)

Feeding on grass, and th'airy moisture licking
Such as those Borometz of Scythia bred
Of slender seeds, and with green fodder fed;
Although their bodies, noses, mouths and eyes,
Of new-yeaned lambs have full the form and guise,
And should be very lambs, save that for foot
Within the ground they fix a living root
Which at their navel grows; and dies that day
That they have browsed the neighbouring grass away.

Guillaume de Salustre du Bartas – *La Semaine*

For many centuries, naturalists seriously believed that a small fleecy creature originated from a truly extraordinary plant's fruit, and was therefore a unique fusion of zoology and botany. Hence its name – the vegetable lamb.

Three depictions of vegetable lambs, 1887 (public domain)

The most extensive modern-day documentation of the vegetable lamb, also known as the barometz or borometz, can be found in Jan Bondeson's fascinating book *The Feejee Mermaid and Other Essays in Natural and Unnatural History* (1999). In it, he reveals that lore relating to lambs supposedly growing out of the ground dates back many centuries in China. Moreover, the earliest known mention of such a creature anywhere appears in a Jewish text from 436 AD entitled the



Talmud Ierosolimitanum, or *Jerusalem Talmud*, written by Rabbi Jochanan, which refers to the yeduah, a lamb-like beast that sprouted from the ground attached to a plant stem. However, it was not until the 14th Century and the publication of a certain English nobleman's extraordinary travelogue that this bizarre plant-animal first attracted appreciable Western attention, after which it swiftly became a staple inclusion in any self-respecting bestiary.

The travelogue in question chronicled the astounding voyages of Sir John Mandeville around the then-known world, in which he claimed to have personally observed all manner of incredible and highly implausible creatures, including the vegetable lamb. This latter entity was supposedly encountered by him during his sojourn in a region of Tartary (a name used at that time for much of northern and central Asia) that nowadays constitutes China. Here is what he wrote about it:

There grows there a kind of fruit as big as gourds, and when it is ripe men open it and find inside an animal of flesh and blood and bone, like a little lamb without wool. And the people of that land eat the animal, and the fruit too. It is a great marvel.



Vegetable lamb as portrayed in Mandeville's travelogue, 14th Century (public domain)

In later centuries, it was revealed that Mandeville had never existed and that his travelogue was a clever hoax, quite probably executed by a 14th-Century Benedictine monk of Flemish extraction called Jan de Langhe, ingeniously incorporating and interpolating tracts extracted from several earlier works penned by real writers (a medieval Italian Franciscan friar and explorer called Odoric of Pordenone in the case of this travelogue's vegetable lamb information).

But by then, the fictional Mandeville's equally fictitious coverage of the vegetable lamb had firmly taken root, in every sense, firing both the imagination of Western naturalists anxious to see for themselves this true wonder of Creation and the inspiration of Western artists including depictions of it in religious illustrations. Perhaps the best example of the latter is the very detailed, ornate frontispiece plate included in English herbalist John Parkinson's monumental treatise *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris* (1629), in which a vegetable lamb can be perceived just behind Adam in the Garden of Eden.

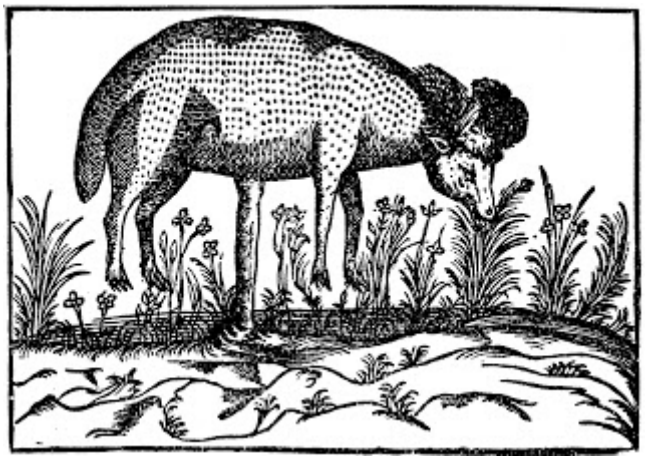
Frontispiece to John Parkinson's *Paradisus Terrestris*, 1629, vegetable lamb arrowed - click image to enlarge it (public domain)

During the mid-16th Century, an equally influential account of the vegetable lamb appeared, this time penned by the celebrated scholar-diplomat Baron Sigismund von Herberstein (1486-1566), who had twice been the German emperor's ambassador at the Court of Muscovy (a Russian principality centring upon Moscow). In his account, published in 1549 within his magnum opus *Notes on Muscovite Affairs*, he added several important details, derived from information passed on



to him by a number of different Russian sources.

In contrast to the Mandeville description claiming that it lacked wool, the Baron's account stated that the vegetable lamb possessed not only a normal lamb's head with eyes and ears, but also a normal lamb's woolly fleece. Its tiny limbs even sported hooves, though these were exceedingly delicate as they were apparently composed merely of compressed hairs, not the hard horny substance of real lambs' hooves. The lamb was permanently attached to a long stem, comparable to an umbilical cord, which grew vertically to a height of approximately 2.5 ft, thus suspending the lamb high above the ground, but it could apparently use its weight to bend the stem downwards, thereby enabling it to stand and walk upon the ground, and also to graze upon any grass or foliage that was within its reach.



Vegetable lamb, from Claude Duret's 1605 book (public domain)

Unfortunately for the vegetable lamb, however, as documented by botanist and fervent barometz believer Claude Duret in his *Histoire Admirable des Plantes et Herbes Esmerueillables et Miraculeuses en Nature* (1605), its flesh was very palatable (said by those who had eaten it to taste like crab meat) and its blood resembled honey. Consequently, it attracted particular gastronomic attention not only from humans but also from marauding packs of wolves, against which the little lamb had no defence. It could not even flee them, as it was irrevocably attached to its stem, and so was invariably torn apart and devoured by its ravaging attackers. Nor was that the only tragic fate that regularly befell this poor creature. Due again to its permanent tethering via its stem, once the lamb had eaten all of the grass and other vegetation within its reach it was doomed to starve to death, after which its plant progenitor died too.

Yet although such tales and accounts made absorbing reading, even in that pre-scientific age scholars still sought physical evidence to corroborate them whenever possible - but what physical evidence existed to confirm the reality of the vegetable lamb? According to the Tartars, they utilised this creature's fine wool as padding for the caps that they wore on their shaven heads at night for warmth, and also – of particular excitement to Western naturalists – some Muscovites claimed that the Tartars would occasionally sell entire vegetable lamb skins, albeit only for inordinately high prices.

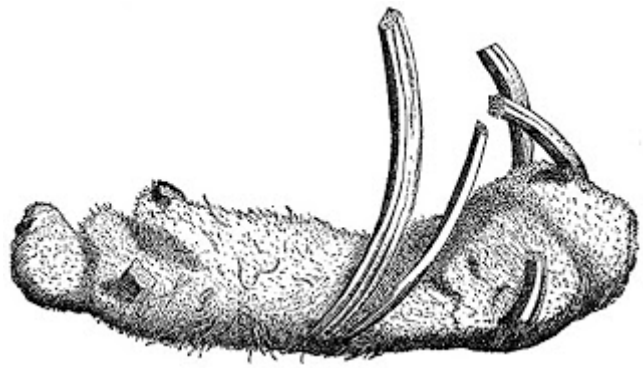
Vegetable lamb depicted in an antique French print, circa 1728 (public domain)

As recorded by Jan Bondeson in his own comprehensive barometz writings, one person who was aware of such claims was Sir Richard Lea, who in 1570 had been appointed the ambassador of England's Queen Elizabeth I to the court of the Russian Tsar, Ivan IV ('The Terrible'). Moreover, he actually succeeded in obtaining a coat lined with vegetable lamb skins, after trading for it with the tsar an exquisite grinding mortar hewn from a magnificent piece of agate. Upon his death in 1609, Sir Richard bequeathed this zoo-botanical (or phyto-zoological?) treasure for safekeeping and study



to none other than Oxford's nowadays world-famous Bodleian Library, which had been founded during that same period of time by Sir Thomas Bodley (1545-1613). Sadly, however, his expectation was not met, as the coat was simply left to deteriorate in condition inside Sir Thomas's own closet. Despite attempts to repair and renovate it during the 1630s and 1640s, it was probably discarded not long afterwards, because by the end of that century its whereabouts were no longer known and have never been ascertained since.

Notwithstanding this very regrettable loss (although 17th-Century German naturalist Dr Engelbert Kaempfer revealed that other such artefacts sold by Tartars were actually derived from the skins of unborn Astrakhan lambs), several entire preserved vegetable lambs have also been formally documented. One, measuring just over 1 ft long, resembled a four-legged wooden branch covered in a shining dark-yellow fleece.



Engraving of Buckley's vegetable lamb, exhibited by Sir Hans Sloane (public domain)

It had originally been purchased from an Indian merchant by a Mr Buckley, and in 1698 it was exhibited at the Royal Society of London by the Society's Secretary, Sir Hans Sloane (whose own extremely substantial collection of artefacts became the foundation of the British Museum after he bequeathed them to the nation).

Moreover, Sloane exhibited a second preserved vegetable lamb at the Royal Society in 1725, this specimen originating in Russia and belonging to German physician Dr Johann P. Breyn. As Jan Bondeson has so aptly commented, however, it looked more like a fox terrier than a lamb!



Engraving of Dr Johann Breyn's terrier-like vegetable lamb (public domain)

Sadly, both of those specimens are now lost, but at least two others do still exist. One of them is a prize exhibit at the Garden Museum in Lambeth, London, which I specifically visited on 6 February 2015 in order to see it. When I arrived, however, I was sad to discover that it was not presently on display, but after the museum's exhibitions curator, Emily Fuggle, learnt of my interest in mysterious and mythological creatures she very kindly treated me to a private viewing of their celebrated specimen, currently residing in the museum's store. Standing in silent dignity, a mute and motionless marvel from a long-bygone age, the vegetable lamb of Lambeth peered ever outwards through the large glass dome inside which it was detained.

This memorable specimen, probably created during the mid-1800s, was an unexpected but very welcome donation to the museum some years ago from a Cambridgeshire doctor whose family had hitherto owned it for over 150 years, but Emily informed me that it is now too fragile and vulnerable

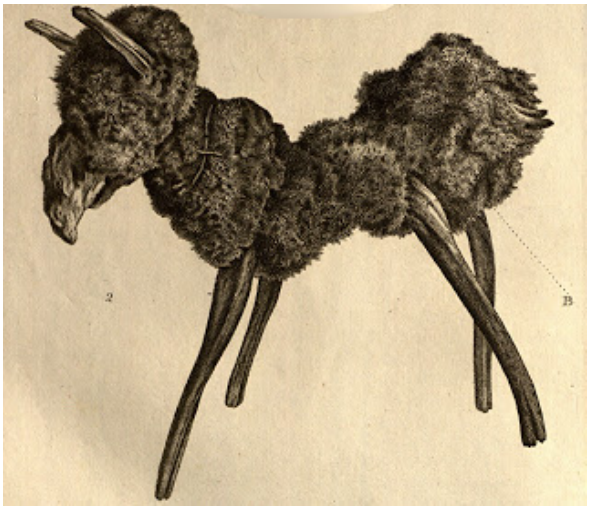
to the effects of light and photography from which its antiquarian glass cupola can no longer shield it adequately for it to be placed on public display at present. Happily, however, there are plans for this unique wonder to return on show at the museum as a permanent exhibit, housed inside a special new case affording it full protection, so I look forward to a return visit there one day to see it again.



Vegetable lamb at GardenMuseum, Lambeth, London(© T.P. Holland, Creative Commons Attributions Licence/Wikipedia - included here on a strictly non-commercial Fair Use basis only)

The second preserved vegetable lamb specimen, which has resided inside its very own chest of drawers for over 200 years, is maintained in the stores of London's Natural History Museum, having only been placed on display once – briefly, in 1934 – during modern times.

However, an engraving of it was prepared during the 18th Century by John and Andrew Rymsdyk, and appears in their *Museum Britannicum* (1778).



The NaturalHistoryMuseum's vegetable lamb, as depicted in an engraving from 1778 (public domain)

Needless to say, vegetable lambs do not, could not exist, and never have done – they are nothing more than an exotic, imaginative fable from the Middle Ages. So how can the preserved specimens be explained – what exactly *are* they?

After examining the two examples that he exhibited at the Royal Society, Sloane had no doubts whatsoever concerning their identity. Both of them were nothing more than the inverted, hairy rhizome or rootstock of some form of large fern, whose roots had been removed, and four of whose frond stems had been retained but carefully shaved and modified to resemble slender legs.



Vegetable lambs depicted in artificially-modified, pseudo-zoological form on left, and in natural, fern-bearing form on right, from *Svenska Familj-Journalen*, vol. 18, 1879 (public domain)

And the only reason why this correct identification had not been readily recognised earlier is that the fern species in question did not begin to be widely introduced into Europe from its native habitat in China and the Malayan Peninsula until the 1800s.

A very large arborescent tree fern that grows up to 3 ft in height and whose fronds can reach 10 ft in length when fully mature, it is nowadays commonly

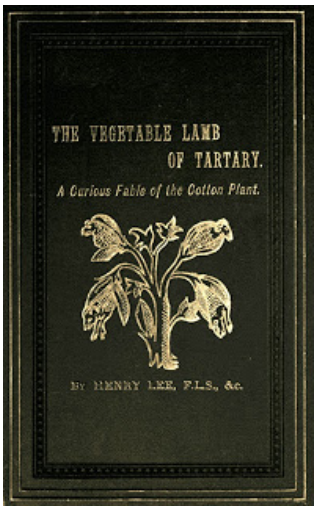
known as the woolly fern, and has been scientifically dubbed *Cibotium barometz* – both names commemorating its link to the vegetable lamb legend.



***Cibotium barometz*(public domain)**

All that remains to be answered, therefore, is how the myth of the vegetable lamb arose in the first place.

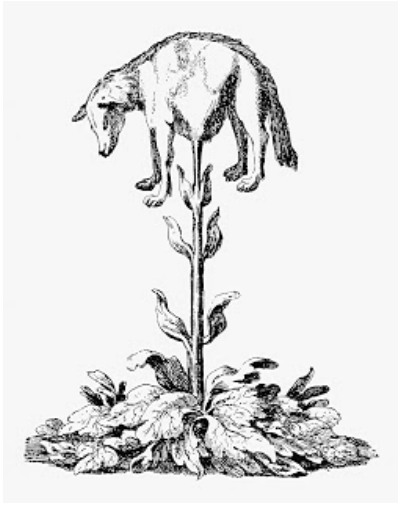
In a concise book devoted to this legendary entity, published in 1887 and entitled *The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary*, Brighton Aquarium naturalist Henry Lee proposed that it was inspired by the cotton plant *Gossypium herbaceum*, whose white clumps of fleecy cotton fibres surrounding the plant's seeds (revealed when its ripe seed pods burst during warm weather) superficially resemble tiny lambs attached to stems. This hypothesis has been supported by a number of subsequent researchers.



Henry Lee's vegetable lamb book's front cover, 1887 (public domain)

However, as Jan Bondeson has tellingly pointed out, the cotton plant had been a familiar, widely-utilised species in Europe for centuries, and for even longer in China, yet with no suggestion anywhere on record of any myths or fables linking it to the production of lambs. So although initially appealing, Lee's proposal is definitely lacking in material support.

Consequently, although we know unquestionably that the vegetable lamb as a biological reality is an impossible concept, the riddle of how belief in this most fantastic of fantasy life-forms began, becoming an enduring myth in China, the Middle East, and thence Europe, still lacks a convincing answer even today.



Vegetable lamb as depicted in Henry Lee's book, *The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary*, 1887 (public domain)

This ShukerNature blog article is exclusively excerpted and expanded from my book***A Manifestation of Monsters***.

Posted by Dr Karl Shuker at 01:30

3 comments:

1. Loes Modderman4 November 2016 at 09:56

I wrote about the Barometz myself and did some reasearch. The Talmud Yerushalmi (as the Jewish name is) was already more than a century closed in the 5th century. I found in The Caberet of Plants, by Richard Mabey mention of a 5th century jewish commentary on Genesis where the 'animal' is not called 'Jeduah' but 'adnei hasadeh', which means 'Lord of the field.

2. Shoshanah Lee Marohn4 November 2016 at 23:23

This is just the craziest thing I've ever read! Thank you for sharing.

- Dr Karl Shuker4 November 2016 at 23:38

Glad you enjoyed it - yes, it's certainly one of the most bizarre false beliefs in the history of natural history. All the best, Karl

DISCLAIMER

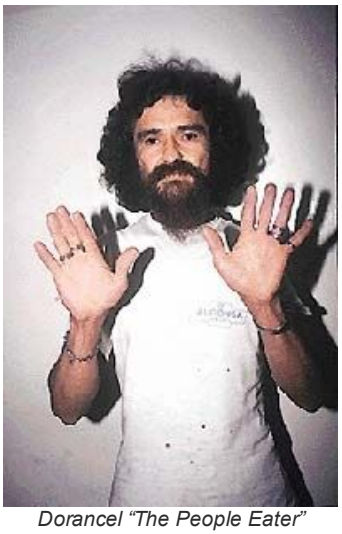
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Venezuelan cannibal makes empanadas out of fellow prisoners: Reports

torontosun.com

First posted: Friday, October 14, 2016 11:20 AM EDT | Updated: Friday, October 14, 2016 11:30 AM EDT



Dorancel "The People Eater" Vargas. (Police Handout)

A notorious cannibal has reportedly been treating other prisoners in a Venezuelan jail as his own personal buffet.

Parents of several prisoners at the jail claim the government has done nothing to stop Dorancel "The People Eater" Vargas from his slaughter.

Vargas has also been accused of trying to entice other prisoners into cannibalism, the parents say.

Cops say Vargas killed -- and devoured -- more than 40 people in the South American country before he was captured.

One heartbroken father detailed in macabre detail how his son died.

"More than 40 prisoners attacked him," Carlos Herrera, father of prisoner Juan Carlos Herrera, told reporters. "They stabbed him and hung him to bleed him out. Mr. Dorancel ... was the one who butchered him to feed him to all the prisoners in the Tachira prison.

"Whoever did not do it (eat the flesh) ... would be beaten, their fingers would be cut off, their legs broken, lungs perforated, they would have their heads smashed in with hammers," Herrera was quoted by Venezuelan media. "It was atrocious and disastrous what those people lived in there."

The devastated dad added that his son was in with the dangerous killer because his family could not pay a bribe to transfer the boy out of harm's way.

Another mother who was also a victim of Vargas' bloodlust told an equally grim tale.

Luz Marina Sepulveda said her son, Anthony Correa, was "tortured, murdered, and butchered, with prisoners forcing other prisoners to eat his remains."

One Spanish news outlet reported that Vargas -- caged since 1999 -- even had a sickening specialty.

"His speciality was to make empanadas with the remains of his victims, which he filled with muscle parts," periodistadigital.com wrote.

Canoe Sun Media is a member of

POSTMEDIA

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100 Years Ago, American Women Competed in Intense Venus de Milo Lookalike Contests

atlasobscura.com

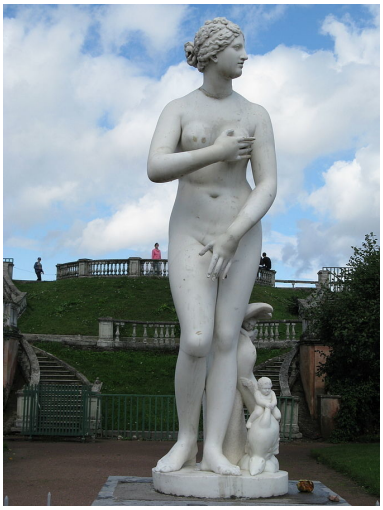
by Ella Morton
January 15, 2016



In February 1916, two prestigious northeast American liberal arts colleges engaged in a spirited war of words, goaded by the media. The conflict, between Wellesley in Massachusetts and Swarthmore in Pennsylvania, did not pertain to academics, admissions, suffrage or sporting teams. They were fighting over which college's female students most closely resembled the Venus de Milo.

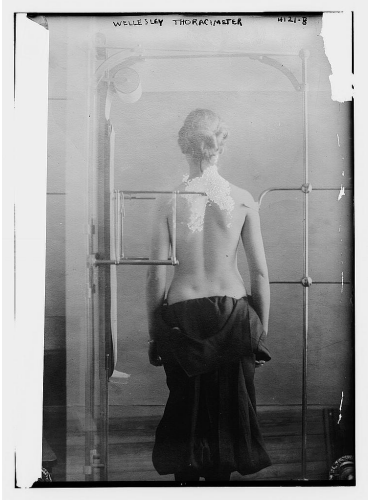
At the time, American women were still getting used to breathing easily, having wrestled free from the tightly laced corsets and bulky bustles of the Victorian silhouette. But in the absence of these strictures they faced a new kind of aesthetically minded pressure: the need to make their measurements correspond to those of a Greco-Roman goddess. The soft curves of Venus—Aphrodite to the Ancient Greeks—were being exalted once again as the paragon of female beauty.

Accordingly, the nation embarked on a quest to find a living, breathing woman whose body was of exact Venusian proportions.



The Wellesley-Swarthmore tiff began on February 10, 1916, when Wellesley released the composite data of its students' measurements. They seemed close enough to Venus' proportions to invite goddess comparisons—the average young woman at Wellesley apparently had a waist circumference within half-an-inch of the hallowed Venus de Milo trunk circumference.

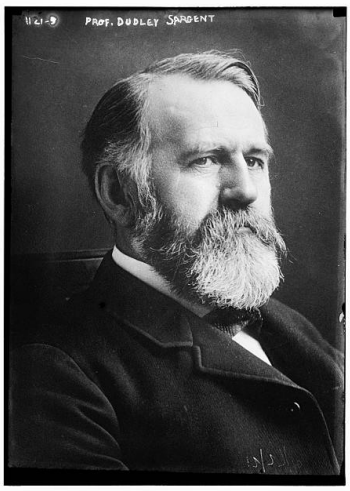
But on February 15, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that Wellesley's "composite Venus" was "outdone by Miss Margaret Willett, the beauty of Swarthmore college and leader in women's athletics, according to measurements of Miss Willett made public today by her friends." Willett's supporters insisted that her figure trumped the collective beauty of Wellesley women since her measurements varied from those of the Venus de Milo by mere *fractions* of an inch. Her bust, in particular, was "practically the same."



In America, the detailed measuring of college students had been standard practice since the 1890s, when the physical culture craze took off at universities. Over the next few decades, physical educators, particularly Dr. Dudley Allen Sargent, director of the Hemenway Gymnasium at Harvard University, collected measurement cards from students all over the northeast. Participating institutions included prestigious women's liberal arts colleges such as Smith, Bryn Mawr, and Mount Holyoke, in addition to Wellesley and the co-educational Swarthmore and Oberlin.

These measurement cards did not require just height, weight, bust, waist, and hips. There were 60 required measurements per person, including instep, wrist, forearm, armspan, and "ninth rib." And all this data

was being put toward new and novel applications. In 1893, Sargent used composite figures from female students' measurements to sculpt a statue and exhibit it at that year's Chicago World's Fair. This figure came to be known as the "Harvard Venus." Visitors to the fair were invited to examine it, reflect on how their own bodies compared, and submit themselves to be measured for Sargent's data collection project.



As the 20th century kicked into gear and the physical culture craze continued at institutes of higher learning, the idea of using measurements to search for a Modern American Venus became more overt. In 1910, Sargent was quoted extensively in a *New York Times* article entitled "Modern Woman Getting Nearer the Perfect Figure."

In it, Sargent derided the "overwomanized" silhouette of the Victorian era. "The American woman of to-day is becoming more like the Greek ideal of the beautiful," he declared. "True beauty consists of symmetrical and proportionate development of parts with adipose [fat] enough to cover the angles and hollows."



By this time, Sargent had collected the measurements of over 10,000 female students, yet he claimed he had still not encountered the ideal woman. “Among the many thousands who have been measured at the gymnasium, not one has fulfilled every requirement,” he told the *Times*. The closest was Annette Kellerman, an Australian swimmer and vaudeville star who stood five-foot-four-and-a-half and sported a 35.2-inch bust, 26.2-inch waist, and 37.8-inch hips. Sargent called her the "perfect woman" for publicity purposes, but he was rounding up.

Over the next decade and a half, Sargent and other physical culture enthusiasts continued to scour the nation to find their human Venus. New contenders were discovered frequently. A *Washington Post* headline in 1912 proclaimed "Cornell Has Perfect Woman," and named basketballer Miss Elsie Scheel of Brooklyn as its Venus de Milo equivalent.

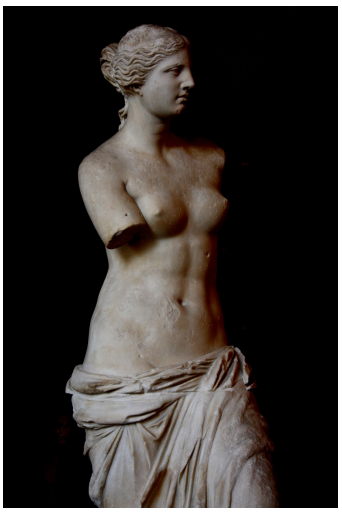
In 1913, the *Oakland Tribune* declared "New Venus is Found By Harvard Savant"—the savant in question being Sargent and the Venus being 19-year-old swimmer Madeline Berle of Revere, Massachusetts. In 1916, New Yorker Irene Kelynack, 21, was dubbed a "flesh-and-blood replica" of the ancient statue, while in 1919 the *Tribune* blared “Los Angeles Has Perfect Girl of Venus Physique,” and identified athlete Rosalind Smith as the new paragon of female perfection.

The ridiculous thing about all this—well, *one* of the ridiculous things—is that these women’s measurements varied from one another by several inches. Not only that, but they were being compared to different standards, for there were multiple versions of the Venus de Milo’s measurements. Some physical culture practitioners quoted the statue’s bust-waist-hip stats as 39-26-38, while others believed she measured in at 34.75-28.5-36. The only stat everyone could agree on was the Venus de Milo’s height, which was set at five-foot-four.

By 1919, the physical perfection of Venus was being questioned. “I do not consider the Venus de Milo perfect,” huffed anthropometrics specialist L.E. Eubanks in *Social Progress*. “Any woman with a 26-inch waist and a 39-inch bust should have an ankle larger than 7.4 inches.”

Still, the Modern Venus searches continued. In October 1922, a particularly contentious competition took place at the Physical Culture Show and Beauty Contest held at Madison Square Garden. At this event, according to the *Pittsburgh Press*, five male judges, all sculptors, “led the young women contestants into a private room in the Garden and minutely inspected the competitors one by one.”

The women were naked during these inspections, “wearing not even so much as a pair of slippers on their feet.” One of the contestants, Ann Hyatt, told the *Press* that she was instructed to remove her bathrobe and then bathing suit. When she murmured that the situation was “very embarrassing,” Herman Moens, the head judge,



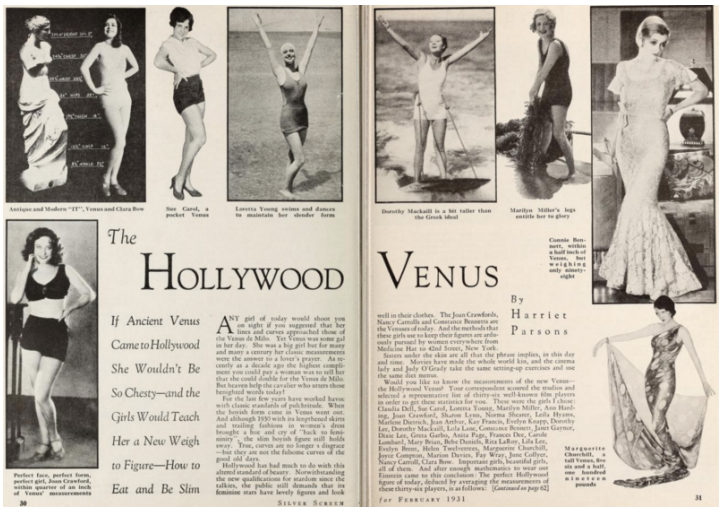
remarked, “But the body is far more beautiful nude.” Then, according to Hyatt, “[t]he other four repeated in a kind of chorus, ‘Yes, indeed. By all means. It certainly is.’”

After every contestant had been subjected to a thorough visual inspection, 18-year-old Dorothy Knapp (five-foot-three; 35.5-25-35) was declared the winner. This devastated Hyatt (five-foot-four; 34.75-28.5-36.5), who had been determined to claim the Miss American Venus title. Refusing to accept the judges’ decision, Hyatt sought the services of a lawyer, who announced his client’s plan to take the case to the Supreme Court of the State of New York. “Miss Hyatt is really, in fact, the most perfectly formed woman in America, the modern Venus of the United States,” her lawyer, David Steinhardt, said. “[I]t is a matter of serious importance to herself, to her husband, and to her children that she should not be defrauded of this conspicuous distinction.”



Miss Hyatt did not have a husband or children. She was just thinking ahead. Her lawyer even laid out a plan for how the Supreme Court could verify Miss Hyatt’s rightful claim to the Modern Venus title over Miss Knapp: “we are prepared to set up in the court room a life-size statue of the great Venus de Milo, and produce our client in court to establish by a series of minutest measurements that Miss Hyatt’s figure more closely follows the dimensions of that accepted masterpiece of art.” (For the arms, famously missing from the statue, Hyatt and her legal team planned to consult the “well-known restoration as made by the distinguished artist, Henri Rochefort.”)

Sadly for Miss Hyatt, her case was judged to be without merit. But times were changing anyhow—the flapper fashions newly in vogue looked best on tall, slender figures, and the Venus de Milo was starting to look a little too plump. In April 1923, the *New York Times* introduced the world to the “new Venus, whose proportions have been reduced by the athletic tendencies of the modern girl.” To be a true American Modern Venus, women now “must be 5 feet 7 inches in height, a perfect 34, with 22-inch waist and 34-inch hips.” Furthermore, “[t]he ankle should measure 8 inches and the weight not exceed 110 pounds.”



And just like that, the beauty rules changed again. After decades of searching and dozens of contenders, America hadn’t found its perfect living, breathing reincarnation of Venus—because she didn’t, and couldn’t, exist.

Three months after the "new Venus" proportions were announced, Dr. R. Tait McKenzie, sculptor and former director of physical education of McGill University, told a crowd of female college students that he had given up on looking for ideal figures among America's young women. Having studied hundreds of measurement cards from colleges in the country's east, he declared that the women were all "slab-chested and knock-kneed"—the "antitheses of Venus," according to the *Oakland Tribune*.

But the fruitless quest for Venus was not the fault of the many thousands of women whose measurements were scrutinized and deemed imperfect over the years. The mistake was in equating human beings with lifeless, albeit carefully sculpted marble. Even L.E. Eubanks, the statue-scrutinizing anthropometrics guy who once declared the Venus de Milo “a trifle top-heavy,” acknowledged the folly of trying to compare live women to ancient sculpture.

“Be a statue perfection itself, it still leaves too much to the imagination,” he wrote in 1919. “[T]here are too many important elements of physical excellence expressible only in life and movement that a mass of stone cannot show.”

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Vetala – A Vampire In Hindu folklore

Vikas Acharya
March 23, 2016

A vetala can be a vampire, a flesh eater and blood drinker, like a skeleton with large tattered wings.



In Hindu folklore, the vetala is an evil spirit who haunts cemeteries and takes demonic possession of corpses.They make their displeasure known by troubling humans which mainly includes affection towards God and good in the person as they want them to be evil minded. In their course of action they can drive people mad by knowing the psychological defects of the person, kill children by making them mentally weak to commit suicide, and cause miscarriages. They say it guards villages, but they are not doing that. According to ancient secret texts available with High Priest of a family they

say during old days bandits used to steal valuable treasure in the Hindu temples to protect them. They made the public believe that vetalas are guarding the village which will be effective to keep the bandits away and believe in the same way the God will be guarding them. They say as the good and bad people live in this world; even the vetalas are good and bad where bad vetalas are only extremely dangerous and good will be servants of God.

This entry was posted in **blog writing**, **Blogger**, **India**, **theacharyaa**, **Travel**, **travel blog by vikas acharya**, **Travel Blogger** and tagged **Blogger**, **Vetala**, **Vikas Acharya**. Bookmark the **permalink**.

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Veteran's Légion d'Honneur sent to Liverpool Costco in error - BBC News

bbc.com

BBC Media captionJoseph Carter received his Légion d'Honneur after it was mistakenly delivered to a supermarket

A Légion d'Honneur medal destined for a World War Two veteran was instead received by staff at a supermarket.

France's highest military honour was meant to be posted to former sailor Joseph Carter, who took part in the liberation of France.

But a postcode mix-up meant it was delivered to the Liverpool branch of Costco instead of Mr Carter, who also lives in the city.

Costco passed it to the Royal British Legion who found Mr Carter on Friday.

French apology

On being told about the attempts to find him, Mr Carter quipped: "I bet you thought I was dead, didn't you."

He said he thought "someone was joking" when he heard it was delivered to Costco.



The Légion d'honneur was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte and is France's highest distinction

Image caption

He said: "I was really surprised because I had forgotten all about it."

Concerning his wartime role in the Royal Navy, he said: "I was only doing a job."

The French embassy, who posted the medal, has apologised for the error.

A spokesman said: "The embassy uses the addresses which are given by the veterans themselves when they send their application."

Image caption The medal was accidentally delivered to a Costco branch in Liverpool

Prior to Mr Carter being found, Bill Sergeant, from the Royal British Legion, told BBC Radio Merseyside he wanted to hand over the medal in time for Remembrance Sunday.

He said it was found by Costco staff in their mail in October, who then passed it to him when he was selling Remembrance poppies at the store.

After trying "hard and failed miserably" to find Mr Carter, he appealed for help on BBC Radio Merseyside on Friday.

Hours later, Mr Carter was found.

"I'm over the moon," said Mr Sergeant. "I'm delighted that he and the medal have been united."

In 2014, French President François Hollande announced the honour would be awarded to all British veterans who took part in military operations in France between 1944 and 1945.

What is the Légion d'honneur?

- The Légion d'honneur was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte
- It is France's highest distinction and is awarded in recognition of both military and civilian achievement
- It has been given to D-Day veterans from many different countries for several years as a way of thanking those who helped liberate the country from the Nazis
- On the 70th anniversary of D-Day in 2014, the French President announced the honour would be given to all British veterans who took part in military operations in France between 1944 and 1945
- Since then, more than 4,300 medals have been awarded to World War Two veterans in the UK

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High Court row over proceeds from Victorian free-love cult church sale

07:35 EST, 7 November 2016 | dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com
MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

Descendants of a 19th century free-love cult leader sue for a £1m payout from the sale of the church where he kept a harem of so-called 'soul brides'

- **Agapemonites sect sprang up in the late 19th century and caused scandal**
- **'Beloved' leader had gaggle of female followers and built church in London**
- **The church's sale has now sparked a High Court case over the proceeds**
- **Granddaughters of leader and h**

By Richard Spillett for MailOnline

The descendants of a sex-obsessed Victorian cult leader are battling in court for a £1million payout they claim is their birthright.

The Agapemonites were a 'very middle class' messianic free-love sect, established in 1846, whose activities scandalised 19th and early 20th century society.

A former CofE clergyman, John Hugh Smyth-Pigott, declared himself the 'new messiah' of the free-love cult in 1902 following the death of its founder.





John Hugh Smyth-Pigott was the leader of the Agapemonites. The sale of one of the sect's churches has now sparked a High Court legal case over who should get the proceeds

Smyth-Pigott and his followers were a curiosity at the time. Pictured: A newspaper image

He is said to have brought together a harem of dozens of what he called 'soul brides' as part of his bizarre cult.

Smyth-Pigott - who was known to his followers simply as 'Beloved' - died in 1927 and the cult faded into obscurity and folded in 1956.

Now his great-granddaughter is spearheading a High Court claim by his six granddaughters, who say they are entitled to the £1million proceeds from the sale of the defunct cult's last place of worship.

Agapemone is seen as a prototype of modern cults, with sex scandals, accusations of brainwashing, dramatic rescues of members by their families, moral outrage from respectable society. It was named from the Greek, Agapemone, meaning 'Abode of Love'.

Rachel Phillips, the great-granddaughter of Smyth-Pigott, is one of those involved

It was founded by defrocked clergyman Henry Prince who set up a base in the quiet Somerset Village of Spaxton, using the money of followers - mostly of wealthy, unmarried women.

The cult's base was a collection of houses and cottages with its own chapel surrounded by a 12ft high wall and guarded by ferocious dogs.

The 'Beloved' leader later expanded and founded other centres, including a London base, the Church of the Arc of the Covenant, in Clapton.



It was in this church that Smyth-Pigott declared himself to be the 'second coming of Christ' in September 1902, before a 6,000 strong crowd.

The sale of the London church in 2010, and uncertainty over who should be given the £1m proceeds of sale, that has sparked the court case.

When the trust deed was drawn up, no-one envisaged a time when the sect and its members would have long passed away.

Trustees who currently hold the £1million have now turned to the High Court for help, asking Judge Andrew Simmonds QC to solve the impasse.

Six granddaughters of Smyth-Pigott and his principal soul bride, Ruth Preece, are involved in the case. They say the money from the church sale should be theirs.



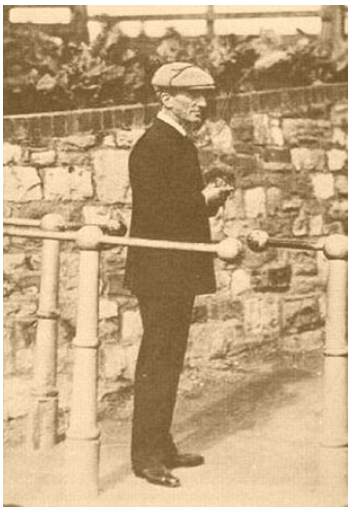
The sect was based in a closed community, living in cottages in Spaxton, Somerset

Their buildings were paid for by his wealthy followers, who critics said he 'brainwashed'

In a statement, they told the High Court: 'All six of us grandchildren have been involved with the Agapemone in one way or another, having spent much of their childhood in the community in Spaxton, Somerset or living in nearby villages.



'Like people born into a religion, they have not followed its precepts, but it has been a formative part of their lives.



Smyth-Pigott, was known as 'The Beloved' by his 'middle-class' female 'soul brides'

'All the community members are now long since deceased and gone and there are no other descendants.

'The six named are the direct descendants of Beloved and his 'soul bride' and are next in line, and are therefore the rightful and only true beneficiaries of the trust.

'What each does in terms of furthering Beloved's legacy should be left to individuals to decide,' the judge was told.

Barrister Andrew Cosedge, for the trustees, told the judge the first option for the money is to hand the granddaughters.

Another would be to attempt to trace any living descendents of the 13 original trustees and to split the money between them allm but that 'could present practical difficulties,' he said.

If all else fails, and the court cannot identify any living person who should receive the money, it will pass to the Crown.

Judge Simmonds, who heard two days of submissons, will give his ruling at a later date.

Comments (

The comments below have not been moderated.

Megafist 1066, Valhalla, Norway, about 5 hours ago

Is it me or am I only person that pronounce the name of their sect. It really doesn't ring off the tongue.

ParrotLady, BD, United Kingdom, about 9 hours ago

Why is the granddaughter wearing flip-flops on such a chilly day?!

Laura, Windermere, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

Bunions, verucca's, ingrowing toenail? What's your point?

luzetuwaxo, luzetuwaxo, Northern Mariana Islands, about 9 hours ago

I leave my 9 to 5 job and now I am getting paid 82 usd hourly. How? I work-over internet! My old work was making me miserable FOb, so I was forced to try-something NEW. One year after...I can say my life is changed-completely for the better! Check it out what i do..... CareersToday100.comtech ..... please don't include "tech" with web address

Dave, Wimbledon England, United Kingdom, about 11 hours ago

I like this bit: 'If all else fails, and the court cannot identify any living person who should receive the money, it will pass to the Crown'. The courts are a business like anything else. Wonder what the verdict will be?!

DaveLong, Dongvale, Bermuda, about 11 hours ago

Sexual union is a holy moment in which a part of Heaven flows into the Earth.

Torpenhow, London, about 10 hours ago

Oh my goodness a Bible thumping goon.

spiachmuncher, aroundhere, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

does that line really work for you?

Myself, Heathfield, about 11 hours ago

Strewth....I wouldn't like to be the poor old Judge. What a hotspotch. All a load of old nonsense but leaving in its wake a claimable fortune. I think I've missed my calling. If it's not too late I'm tempted to set myself up as the Messiah of East Sussex. Trouble is I have enough to do dealing with "er indoors". The idea of any more ladies is just too impossibly daunting. Er indoors....Bless! G Bartholomew

United_Kinkdom, London, United Kingdom, about 6 hours ago

Oh come on, man up!!!!

Banderras, london , United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

This is Highgate? There is no way the property is not worth millions, trustees seem to be lining their pockets..

Naaman, London, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

My ancestors were involved with the Agapemonites as wealthy Irish landowners; I wish I could say it was the worst thing my lot did.

wantefc, wigan, United Kingdom, about 12 hours ago

Abode of love.. Lol that's what I call my car

CharlesHarder, Bel Air, Heard Island And McDonald Islands, about 13 hours ago

S E X spell caster, dirty b u g g e r.

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New book reveals what Victorian ladies were told about sex dailymail.co.uk

Daily Mail .com

MailOnline US - news, sport, celebrity, science and health stories

A drunken roll in the hay will produce idiot children, sex standing up can kill you and after-dinner hanky panky may trigger a stroke: New book reveals what Victorian ladies were told about sex

- **Women in the Victorian era were encouraged to be restrained and unadventurous between the sheets**
- **Drunken sex, different positions and 'over-excitement' were all strongly discouraged by experts at the time**
- **Details revealed in new book, Unmentionable: The Victorian Lady's Guide to Sex, Marriage, and Manners**
- **Author Therese Oneill also looks at women's hygiene and the literal poisons they used in the name of beauty**

By Valerie Siebert For Dailymail.com

Published: 04:42 EST, 27 October 2016 | Updated: 08:32 EST, 27 October 2016

Women's magazines are packed with tips on how to be more adventurous between the sheets; readers are encouraged to be racier and sexier, and almost nothing is considered out-of-bounds in the modern bedroom.

But it was a different story for their corseted sisters of the Victorian era. Prim and proper was the order of the day, and regular intercourse, different positions and 'over-excitement' were all strongly discouraged.

And now a new book, Unmentionable: The Victorian Lady's Guide to Sex, Marriage, and Manners, by writer and historian Therese Oneill, is detailing the incredibly straight-laced sex tips that were being offered to women at the turn of the 20th century.





Cautioned: A new book details the most intimate aspects of Victorian women's lifestyles, from hygiene tips, such as making sure not to bathe too regularly, to sex advice, with woman being strongly warned against having sex standing up

A lot of work: Historian and author Therese Oneill also reveals that women were told not to engage in sex after drinking for fear that any child conceived during this time would be afflicted with 'idiocy' and 'numerous nervous maladies'

For example, having sex while standing up, or with the woman's knees drawn up, were both off the cards, with one expert cautioning: 'No female can desire such intercourse as this because she cannot enjoy it.'

Another added: 'A woman of delicate mould and constitution may be fatally injured in this manner.'



And any risque behavior at the end of an alcohol-fueled night was to be avoided as children conceived when their parents were drunk were likely to be afflicted with 'idiocy and numerous nervous maladies'.

Women were also told not have sex after a big meal as it could trigger a stroke.

While the advice might seem bizarre and outdated, author Therese explained to Daily Mail Online that she wasn't afraid to avoid the humorous element of her research, saying that her aim from the start was to write a 'funny, accurate, beautiful book'.

She added: '[I wanted to write a] book that gave some of the missing pieces of history: the ones most people thought weren't important enough to write down but none-the-less gnaw at the minds of modern history lovers.

'I wanted to invite my reader to touch the linen of her nightgown and smell the rot of the Thames and taste the non-refrigerated pigeon meat.

'To me, that brings the past, which can never ever co-exist with us, no matter how much we crave it, as close to being real as possible.'

In addition to beauty and bathroom business, the book also looks at the ins and outs of courting, marriage, and even the ways in which women were told to avoid becoming the topic of any public gossip.

To demonstrate the readers the difference between the realities of life in the Victorian era, and the glossy image created in fiction, Therese starts the book by inviting readers on a journey back in time to the days romanticized by the likes of Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters and of course all the filmmakers of the many period films and TV shows on offer today.

- Out in force! Trump women put on a very glamorous display as... The REAL cost of your handbag habit: Women own an average of... 'Jeremy Kyle got flattened by a woman': Host is FLOORED...

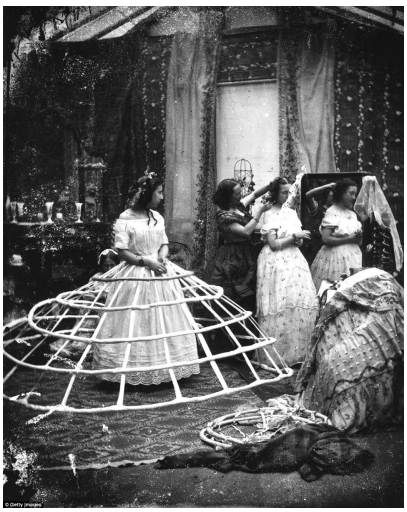




Boring is better: Having sex with a woman's knees drawn up was also off the cards, with one expert cautioning: 'No female can desire such intercourse because she cannot enjoy it'. Sex after a big meal, or after drinking, was also discouraged

Layer upon layer: Underwear was usually left crotchless to facilitate the use of a chamber pot, as women would have to navigate the extensive layers of fabric they were dressed in, with some even wearing wood crinoline frames for their skirts

But of course, the reader is soon in for a shock, as they are brought back to reality with a bump, as Therese quickly informs them that they have entered a world where the idea of a woman even cleaning her own nether region is considered



impure.

Despite this, underwear would come without a crotch so as to facilitate relieving oneself without having to even lift any skirts - a task which was almost impossible in itself thanks to the seemingly endless layers of garments and unbendable corsets worn by women during the era - not to mention the wood-frame crinolines used to maintain a skirt's shape.

Therese is also quick to note that despite the beautiful imagery put across by photographs and fiction, this era was an incredibly unsanitary time, from human waste flowing in the streets to dubious hygiene standards put forth by doctors.

The combination, she explains, makes for a time in history where society, quite literally, stank.

'Beauty-wise, it was trying to imagine how bad the world smelled,' says Therese of her biggest shock from doing research. 'They had no deodorant until the end of the century. So instead, they doused themselves in perfume. Perfumed hair oil, perfumed talc powder, everything thing a lady put near her skin was infused with thick floral perfume to try and mask body odor.

'And the perfumes they used were not like ours. Last Christmas my husband bought me Penhaligon's Bluebell Soap from London, which we'd read was nearly unchanged in recipe since Queen Victoria used it. I don't know if that's entirely accurate but I do believe it's a close facsimile to how scented soap would have smelled then.'

'I keep the box closed. It's gorgeous, but it smells like a closet full of dead "get well soon" flower arrangements. It had to be that way though, our light and airy scents would not have cloaked the awful stench of 19th century living.'

Another popular scent used to mask malodorous smells was ambergris, which came from fluid found in the intestines of sperm whales - or 'whale's poop mucus' as Therese dubs it.

Water was rife with disease back then thanks to fecal matter being nearly everywhere, yet somehow that is not the reason that doctors recommended infrequent bathing. Many believed that 'wetting the whole body at once' would leave it vulnerable to infection. Freezing cold sponge baths were the preferred method.

As for washing hair, women were instructed to dilute pure ammonia with warm water and rub it into the scalp.

Once in a while: Women of the era were warned against washing their genitals too frequently - if at all - and were also advised not to bathe too often. It was even believed by some that 'wetting the whole body at once' could lead to illness

'Ammonia becomes highly corrosive when reacting to water, which would probably be very effective at stripping hair of grime,' Therese writes in the book. 'Also skin of its superfluous top few layers.'

Another option for 'shampoo' was using onion juice, which certainly couldn't help with the cornucopia of smells already emanating from the largely unwashed bodies.



Therese reveals that she did in fact try out the ammonia version from a Victorian recipe as a part of a science experiment for her eight-year-old daughter.

'It took two weeks and about $50 to track down all the ingredients. We used cold water and an old-fashioned pitcher and basin, everything. Turns out pouring ammonia and tincture of blood root over the head of a kid whose only ever known "no tears" baby shampoo is a terrible idea,' she says.

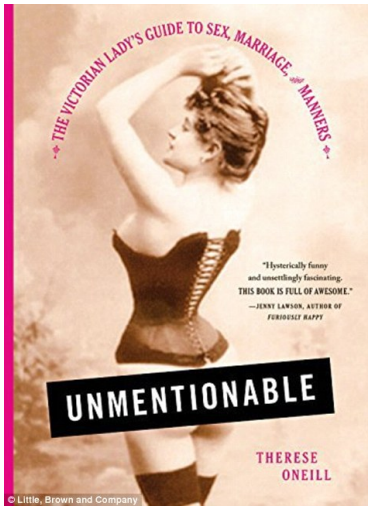
'But honestly, though her hair felt heavier and less clean, it was more manageable and silky. And, y'know... soaked in ridiculously expensive ammonia soup...so I wouldn't recommend it.'

As for her face, the Victorian woman was no stranger to make-up, but the materials used to produce them at the time were anything but pleasant on the skin. In fact, they were often downright poisonous.

Eyeliner would often be made 'from the same stuff as writing ink', deadly nightshade was squirted into the eyes for a 'sensual look' owing to a dilated pupil, and early versions of foundation would be made with plenty of lead - used for a process called 'enameling'.



Looking things over: Cosmetics used during the Victorian era were actually full of poison, including lead which would be used by women for 'enameling' their faces



For the ladies: A new book looks at the daily lives of women living in the Victorian era

This involved cleaning the face and then spreading the 'shiny paste of white lead' over the face, leaving a smooth complexion and pores 'clogged with both a youthful vivacity and a lethal mineral imbalance'.

Another method of achieving a youthful complexion was sleeping raw animal fat smeared over the skin, or strips of beef to banish wrinkles.

Similarly, women were always on a lookout for away to shed pesky extra pounds, and chemists were only too happy to sell them a myriad of miracles.

Some weight loss medicines actually contained actual poisons such as arsenic and strychnine, while others involved ingesting a growing tapeworm that would later need to be killed with more medicine and manually removed while over the chamber pot.

Elsewhere in the book, Therese describes how woman could best snare a husband, mostly through being meek, silent and totally obedient.

Given that the uterus was blamed for everything wrong with a woman - including the dreaded diagnosis of hysteria - it was recommended that it was kept occupied.

'Try to imagine your uterus as a highly strung, frantic woman . . . she can't stand being bored. She wants challenges! She wants work to do,' Therese writes with more than a hint of sarcasm.

Comments (290

The comments below have not been moderated.

Hicky, Dublin, Ireland, 24 minutes ago

Jeremy Corbyn is obviously a result of a roll in the hay then.

Skidoo, Calgary, 31 minutes ago

There's a popular air freshener whose adverts talk about "nose blindness" when you get used to smells and don't notice them. 50 years ago it was common for cigarette and cigar smoke to dominate public places. Go to a movie theatre, restaurant, the bus, even airplanes, and the air was filled with smoke. And people breathed it and didn't complain. We're being told now the smell of cannabis is something we're all going to have to get used to and pot addicts and users are poster children for nose blindness (sorry, guys, unless you change clothes or bathe in perfume/cologne after smoking you stink). It's all relative. Something that to 2016 noses smells like old rotten flowers might have been quite nice to the noses of 1850.

Violet, Tornado Alley, United States, 19 minutes ago

They will stink of patchouli. Hippie oils. :-(

TTreen, Codsall, United Kingdom, 33 minutes ago

"...after-dinner hanky panky may trigger a stroke...". Conversely, an after-dinner stroke may trigger hanky panky - depending upon what's being stroked and who's stroking it.

Dave, Wimbledon England, United Kingdom, 35 minutes ago

In the 1830s in poorer quarters, almost one in five children never reached the age of six and in the general population 1% of mothers died after childbirth. Mothers could not grow too attached to children who might never reach adulthood. And faced repeated heartbreak before they could have children. Being a single parent, for most of the population, was an impossible option. The Victorians were not repressed. They were just being sensible.

Violet, Tornado Alley, United States, 1 hour ago

That noxious shampoo mixture wasn't universally used. Many people just washed their hair with soap, then got the alkali out with a mild acid rinse (lemon juice for blondes, apple cider vinegar for brunettes). Between washes, some brushed their hair with bran or some other substance to absorb the excess oil.

Crystal-Clear, London, United Kingdom, 1 hour ago

Dear God, they didn't wash "down there" I would be petrified to have these patients if I were a gynaecologist in that era... anywhere down needs to be dead clean how can you even compromise or give an option for such a thing? Things have deformation changed.

Violet, Tornado Alley, United States, 20 minutes ago

That's a myth. People might not sit soaking in a bath, but many families had the weekly ritual of standing in a tin or copper kettle in the kitchen, soaping up everything, and having Mother pour hot water over their heads, usually on Saturday night.

Ian Tinn, Slough, United Kingdom, 1 hour ago

Sex standing up can kill you? I suppose it depends on the weight of the woman.

The MAN WITH NO NAME, CITY, Vatican, 1 hour ago

Oh, an era where F eminism didn't exist & at the slightest m isdemeanor, a good ole s pank to bring her back to reality :-P !

Violet, Tornado Alley, United States, 1 hour ago

Actually, women had Mad Money for transportation to escape over-eager dates, and turn-of-the-century subway riders used hatpins to discourage gropers. Women have always had coping skills. :-)

The MAN WITH NO NAME, CITY, Vatican, 1 hour ago

Oh, an era where Feminism didn't exist & at the slightest misdemeanor, a good ole s pank to bring her back to reality :-P !

Graham Price, Romford, United Kingdom, 1 hour ago

Don't you believe it, you can bet most people ignored all this rubbish anyway going by the size of some victorian families. Oh, and cunny has always been a good starter.

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Victorian Pornography Part IV: Jack Saul

graduable.com

https://graduable.com/2013/04/15/victorian-pornography-part-vi-jack-saul/



The Graduable

15*Monday*Apr 2013

This week's blog post is doing double duty. It is serving as an important part of my continuing series on Victorian pornography as well as giving insight into my more specific research interests. This post is adapted from a paper I presented recently, so recently, in fact, that I have not yet had the time to put in all the proper citations and whatnot. This will be done shortly, but I thought it was more important to just get the post up first because it isn't incomprehensible without them, just a little frustrating if you want to look at the source material (and who does? Am I right?)

The Historical and the Literary Jack Saul

Jack Saul is not necessarily a familiar name in Victorian literary studies, though one aim of this paper is to make the case for Saul to be considered in conversations alongside other such Victorian figures as Oscar Wilde and George Ives, who are both retroactively credited as gay rights pioneers. Saul 'lived' (and I say lived in scare quotes for reasons that will become obvious soon enough) in the pages of two pornographic texts published in the early 1880s, The Sins of the Cities of the Plain which purported to be a memoir of his recollections as a Mary Ann (a derogatory Victorian term for a male who dressed as a female and usually offered his/her services as a prostitute), and its 1883 sequel Letters from Laura and Eveline, which makes no explicit mention of Saul but his Mary Ann persona, Eveline, is carried over from Sins. The issue with these depictions of Saul is that,revealing as they are, there is no good proof that one person called Jack Saul wrote or was the inspiration for either of these books. Sins represents the first appearance of Saul's name in the period. As such, Saul does not have the cultural cachet of a writer such as Wilde or Ives because the historical Saul, in addition to being a putative author, was an unabashed 'professional sodomite' ostensibly from Dublin working the streets and brothels of London as a 'gay man', the contemporary term for prostitute that has nothing to do with sexuality, though our modern sensibilities cannot help but read it as such. In fact, the term 'gay lady/woman' was widely used to describe female prostitutes, but I don't know of any instance of its beingg used to describe a male one. His stock-in-trade was escorting men — sometimes important and titled men — in Victorian London and I will argue that his name, through both literary and cultural avenues, became something of a byword for homosexuality in the period. The name entered the public consciousness through the libel trial that came about as a result of the Cleveland Street Scandal of 1889 at which a man calling himself Jack Saul turned witness for the prosecution and his theatrical performance on the stand shocked sensibilities with its unapologetic self-incrimination. Saul's outspoken testimony, and the subsequent failure of prosecuting Saul for any of it, is something that scholars are still trying to wrap their heads around. What this paper aims to do, then, is examine three phases of Jack Saul: Saul the author, Saul the professional sodomite, and Saul the early gay rights activist. Keep in mind, however, that

Jack Saul is a slippery figure that does not lend himself to being positively identified, even if he was in the business of oversharing.

Saul the Author

I am going to begin with Jack Saul the author. The Sins of the Cities of the Plain is the clandestinely published 1881 memoir with the subtitle Confessions of a Mary Ann. The 'Mary Ann', a derogatory term for a man dressed in female attire, in question is, of course, Jack Saul. While the book is classified as a memoir, its subject matter is of a decidedly lewd nature in comparison to mainstream memoirs, for this is a memoir recounting the erotic experiences of Jack Saul, commissioned by a wealthy client, that uses the memoir genre as a way of differentiating itself from a more straightforward pornographic text and ostensibly offering its readers an exclusive look at London's homosexual underground. The book begins with the patron's, one Mr. Cambon, recounting his meeting an "effeminate but very good-looking young fellow…dressed in tight-fitting clothes" who was "favoured by nature by a very extraordinary development of the male appendages" whom he subsequently hires for sex. The fellow in question introduces himself, after some ritualistic courting, as "Saul, Jack Saul, sir of Lisle Street, Leicester Square" who was "ready for a lark with a free gentleman at any time". After some description of a few of their multiple sexual encounters, which are reminiscent of the surfeit of pornographic text available at the time, Cambon wishes not to "pall his readers" with "repetition of [their] numerous orgies of lust" but instead opts to "content [him]self" with presenting Saul's memoirs that he has commissioned Saul to write at a rate of 5 pounds per week for "thirty or forty pages per week, tolerably well written" beginning with a section entitled "Early Development of Pederastic Ideas in His Youthful Mind." The narrative is, straight away, framed in such a way as to distance itself from the constraints of the pornographic genre that were evident in so many texts but, at the same time, the memoir sections ultimately end up by falling into the common tropes of repetition, overwrought description of body parts and functions, as well as a picaresque assortment of lascivious scenes. In this way, then, begins Saul's memoir: first person accounts of every kind of sexual experience, from boyhood through adulthood; gay, straight, and other; amateur to professional. The memoir takes the shape of so much Victorian pornography, with its flagellation scenes and repetitive descriptions of copulation. There are also other standard scenes including early experiences with a cousin, first homosexual encounters at boarding school, and, later, descriptions of soldiers and others in the sex trade Saul became part of. There are also unique scenarios that fall outside the scope of expected or canonical sexual encounters, among these are a scene of bestiality and instances of hermaphrodism and gender inversion, as well as miscegenation, and the abrupt end which is followed by essays in defense of 'Arses Preferred Cunts', 'Sodomy', and, surprisingly, 'Tribadism' that make no claim to have been written by Saul and seemingly appear out of nowhere and out of sync with the rest of the narrative. It isn't until the 1893 novel Teleny that we get a proper homosexaul, albeit pornographic, bildungsroman with a proper narrative and denouement. The difference, of course, is that the memoir genre Sins is part of offers its readers a supposedly more authentic experience if they believe that the subject is a real person. In other notable erotic memoirs, John Cleland's 1749 Fanny Hill, it is either clear that the subject is not an actual person or there is little indication that the memoirs are, in fact, true. The latter would be the case with Sins except that the name Jack Saul keeps appearing outside the pages of pornography.

Sins' publication in 1881 is significant in the Saul timeline. By any published accounts it is the first time that Saul's name appears anywhere, but if the memoir holds any truth, Saul had been involved in a notorious scandal ten years prior in London's West End. Just before a chapter entitled "Some Frolics with Boulton and Park", Saul recounts a key scene in the 1870 Boulton and Park cross-dressing scandal in which the two defendants, Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park — Stella and

Fanny, respectively — were accused of 'conspiracy to commit the felony' of (sodomy) with MP Lord Arthur Clinton. In the Boulton and Park court trial, it could not be proved that the felony had taken place and many of the details were deemed too shocking to be published in the papers, but Saul's recollection recounts the scene with Lord Arthur in great detail in a behind-the-scenes or, rather, through-the-keyhole perspective, giving every last detail of the affair. Among the final scenes of the book we find Saul 'frolicking' with Boulton and Park and this narrative is continued in a pornographic epistolary novel published two years later, in 1883, billed as "An Appendix to the Sins of the Cities" entitled Letters from Laura and Eveline. Laura and Eveline being the names used by Ernest Boulton and Jack Saul, respectively, in Sins. There is no evidence that anyone named Jack Saul was involved in the Boulton and Park affair or that the accused knew anyone of that name. The reason the inclusion of the Boulton and Park material in Sins is significant is because, outside of literature, Saul became involved in two other significant sex scandals involving homosexuals and important men within a decade of its publishing. I now want to turn to a brief history of Saul's professional involvement with scandal.

Saul the Professional Sodomite

Little is known about John (Jack) Saul except that he was supposedly a male prostitute in London originally from Ireland known as 'Dublin Jack' and that he was admittedly involved in at least two scandals involving male homosexuality and prostitution in the late nineteenth century. The first such case was the Dublin Castle Scandal of 1884 which involved "rumours of a homosexual 'ring' in Dublin Castle, the centre of power of the [English] colonial administration [in Ireland]" (Hanafin 413) brought about by two Irish Nationalist Members of Parliament who ran a libellous story in the militant nationalist journal United Ireland (Hyde, Love 128) accusing other officials of indecent acts. Because of the accusations made by the members, Saul was brought to Dublin from London to testify蜉 for the Crown in the libel case that ensued against United Ireland. The allegations of the scandal came to involve high-ranking individuals from the Irish Parliament but "none of the evidence was published either in the Irish or English newspapers, and…all court records were destroyed in the Irish civil war" (Hyde, Love 132) so no record of the allegations or Saul's testimony survives蜉 except in brief allusions from his future testimony in the second, and much more widely reported, scandal five years later in London's West End at a male brothel located at 19 Cleveland Street. It became known in the British media as the West End Scandal and is better known historically as the Cleveland Street Scandal. Like its Dublin Castle precursor, the Cleveland Street Scandal involved various high-ranking gentlemen caught up in male prostitution and Saul turned witness for the Crown testifying in a libel suit brought about by one of the alleged clients, Earl of Euston, against a newspaper that accused him of having patronized the brothel. This time, however, the testimony has been largely preserved and Saul is on record as admitting to living the "same kind of immoral life in London as he had previously done in Dublin" (Hyde, Cleveland 146). The Earl of Euston won his libel suit even though Saul, an avowed prostitute at Cleveland Street and other bawdy houses, admitted to being party to a number of incriminating acts with the Earl. Saul's openness in testifying to these acts left him open for prosecution, though he was never charged, much less prosecuted, to the chagrin of Henry Labouchere, of the Labouchere Amendment that convicted Wilde. It is entirely plausible that Saul's admissions were so shocking and new that lawmakers were simply overwhelmed or felt that Saul, the common prostitute, would not make a good example of the new Criminal Law Amendment Act. This was, of course, left to the prosecution of Wilde five years later.

Although the details of Saul's life in London's underground homosexual world are scarce and largely gleaned from his testimony in the Cleveland Street Scandal court case, the existence of Saul's supposed memoir Sins of the Cities of the Plain may be where at least two of the Saul personas converge: on the one hand, John Saul is a notorious male prostitute who escapes criminal

punishment in two separate scandals even though he unabashedly implicates himself as a sexual deviant and criminal under the law; conversely, there is the literary Jack Saul whose memoirs of a long career as a male prostitute or MaryAnn蜉 are documented in the memoir. There are a number of details in the novel that suggest these two personages might be, if not one and the same, at least based on the same person or somebody with a similar background. The novel should not be read as a statement of fact in any case, though it can be read as a text which illuminates a parallel history of late Victorian London that includes all manner of perversion, criminality, and implication of real life persons in scenes, whether fictionalized or based on behind-closed-doors fact, that would render the Dublin Castle and Cleveland Street scandals all but non-events in the history of homosexuality in Britain. I will consider Jack Saul's recollections as they are presented in the novel – that is, commissioned by a wealthy patron of Saul's full range of services – within the context they were written and question for whom they were collected and distributed to, seeing as the initial print run of the privately printed 1881 edition was limited to two hundred and fifty. The scenarios described in Sins indicate a London that has secrets kept by many men, both powerful and lowly, capable of being shared only within certain spaces. Cleveland Street and other scandals of the period seem to reflect the type of communities prevalent in the novel. The book's clandestine publication and limited distribution suggest a mirroring of the events and audience for such a work. This literature, while not a wholly trustworthy historical source as such, provides at least a glimpse into the culture of a subversive underground community engaged in the "crime not fit to be named among Christians" (Kaplan 293), a definition which suggests an entirely different project focusing on the Christian themes and allusions throughout Saul's entire existence, but I will save that for another time.

Saul the Activist

Jack Saul the activist is the culmination of the previous two Sauls, the author and the professional sodomite. We cannot say for certain who Saul was, whether he was a literary invention or someone whose life was so eventful that it really was the subject of an erotic memoir, or some combination of the two. Where Saul as activist begins is in the way the name continually reappears throughout the late nineteenth century. If we assume for a moment that Jack Saul was a character created by an anonymous writer who penned Sins of the Cities of the Plain, then the use of that name by someone in later criminal trials is telling. In this case, the name would have carried some weight in terms of the codification of London's underground homosexual community, with Jack Saul becoming a byword for homosexual activity and scandal. If that is the case, there very well could have been many men using the name for various purposes, chiefly as a means of identifying who was trustworthy and in on the shared secret men who love other men were forced to keep until only recently.

The other option, of course, is that Jack Saul was actually a prostitute from Dublin who was involved in the Boulton and Park, Dublin Castle, and Cleveland Street affairs, as per his testimony in his memoir and on the witness stand. He was not a literary creation, but instead a real person who inspired a memoir based on his lascivious life spent cultivating his professional sexual prowess to such an extent that late in his career (internal evidence from Sins and the police report for the Cleveland Street affair put Saul's age in 1889 at approximately 38) he decided that he had little to lose in freely admitting to having lived an "immoral life" and, by flouting the authorities and sexual mores, became a symbol of the struggle homosexuals had faced and would continue to do. In this way, we can point to Saul the individual as an early gay rights activist.

Because things are never as simple as we might like them to be, it is, in my opinion, more likely that Saul is some combination of the previously mentioned options. Saul acts effectively as a bridge

between the world of the written word and the physicality of London's homosexual communities. The memoir, Sins, works as a cipher for London's homosexual community, for which the name Jack Saul may have been one small part of the shared secrets of a select group of publishers, writers, male prostitutes, consumers, and others. It describes in detail goings on in London's homosexual underground and can be used as something of a geographical companion to the 'sins' of London which is, of course, a stand in for the book's biblical reference to Sodom and Gomorrah. The totality of Jack Saul, from author to activist, and the complication of pinning down a character that ought to be easily pinned down on account of his openness in sharing his life's work, make his name one deserving of further study for clues into parallel histories of print culture, sexuality, and crime in Victorian England.

9 thoughts on "Victorian Pornography Part IV: Jack Saul"

1. Pingback: Walking in London II: Pornographic Addresses | The Graduable

2. Pingback: Walking in London III: More Pornographic Addresses | The Graduable

3. Patrick Kearney *said:*

30 October 2013 at 2:15 pm

The first edition of "Sins of the Cities" was published at London in 1881 by William Lazenby, and is now a 'lost' book. Reprints began to appear in 1891, predated in the customary manner of pornographers. The authorship is interesting, and there has been some speculation that the basis for the text may have been an authentic memoir by Jack Saul, edited for the press by James Campbell Reddie, author and collector of erotica and also a homosexual. There is an extraordinarily indescreet piece of gossip in "The Pearl" — a pornographic Victorian periodical — in which Reddie's weakness for young men is spelled out vividly. There is also the possibility that Saul's memoirs, in MS, may have been given to Lazenby by Simeon Solomon. Solomon knew Lazenby, as is shown in a letter from the former to Swinburne.

"Letters from Laura to Eveline [i.e. Boulton & Saul]" is not by Saul, but by its publisher, Lazenby, who may also have written the "essays" that conclude "Sins of the Cities."

- justinohearn *said:*

30 October 2013 at 2:37 pm

Thanks for your comments, Patrick. It has also been speculated that the 1903 edition of *Letters* was post-dated, which I find very odd. Do you know of any reprints before 1898?

  - Patrick Kearney *said:*

31 October 2013 at 11:46 am

There is a reprint of "sins of the City" in the British Library at pressmark P.C.14.h.10 which was published about 1891 in Paris. The publisher is uncertain. Perhaps an early work by Chas. Carrington or else Mme Lalouette Douce, the former partner of J.-J. Gay.

I am unaware of any copy extant of the first edition of “Letters”; like the first edition of “Sins” it is a lost book. For the existence of both we must rely on H. S. Ashbee’s descriptions. The 1903 edition to which you refer was actually published in that year, at Paris, probably by Duringe & Chas. Hirsch, and printed for them by Renaudie. There is a copy in the British Library (P.C. 13.c.11) which they received as part of the Dawes bequest in 1964.

4. Pingback: Talk on Jack Saul and Sins of the Cities of the Plain | The Graduable

5. Piers Dudgeon *said:*

12 October 2015 at 3:19 am

Fascinating paper. I am fishing. In the process of your research, did you come across material about the English writer E V Lucas, who is supposed to have had the largest collection of pornography in Britain? I am also a writer with a particular interest in J M Barrie (2 books: Captivated – in US, Neverland; and The Real Peter Pan). Lucas (1868-1938) was one of Barrie’s closest friends, along with another writer A. E. W. Mason (1865-1948). I would like to know more about Lucas’s interest in interest in pornography.

- justinohearn *said:*

7 December 2015 at 1:36 am

Piers. My apologies for the extremely late reply. I hadn’t seen the notification of your comment. I have not come across any material about Lucas, but I am not surprised about this. It has been my experience that many important pornography collections from that era were successfully kept under wraps after the owners’ death or quietly disbursed so that no trace remains. I am certain there are collections like Lucas’ alleged one just collecting dust all over Britain.

Thanks for the comment. Let me know if you have any other questions and I’ll do my best to help you out.

6. Pingback: The Sins Of The Cities Of The Plain by Jack Saul. This review is by John Cook | queerreaders

British Association for Victorian Studies Postgraduate Pages, hosted by Emma Butcher (Hull) and Abby Boucher (Glasgow)

Blog at WordPress.com.

Video: Psychic Scottish goat predicts next US president

scotsman.com

A fortune-telling billy goat has predicted who the next President of the USA will be.

Boots the goat does stunts normally tackled by performing dogs - and he has one trick up his sleeve that even the pooches won't attempt.



Animal trainer Sue Zacharias, 49, taught the three-year-old pedigree Golden Guernsey to predict the future of guests at their shows.

Boots, who lives on a farm near Jedburgh, Roxburghshire, correctly foresaw the result of the Brexit vote in June.

And the goat has now predicted that Hillary Clinton will finish ahead of Donald Trump in the US presidential race.

His prediction method is rather simple for a goat; he simply chooses from two pieces of paper with each answer on them.



Sue, a mum-of-two, said: "Boots is a popular goat as it is and he's already well known around the UK.

"We gave him two options to see who might become the next US President. He picked Clinton.

"He has been correct in the past, so I definitely think his prediction may be popular in America."

Sue is not surprised that Boots, who is part of her Les Amis D'onna equine stunt team, has become a celebrity thanks to his tricks.

She added: "I don't think there's another performing goat in the whole of Scotland, so he's very special."

After being rejected by his mum after he was born, Sue took care of him and they have been now working together for nearly three years.

He works alongside 14 horses, four dogs and sixteen members of staff to perform at outdoor events all over the UK.





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Voodoo witch doctors filmed 'killing man before they bring him back to life'

By Patrick Lion 13:01, 15 NOV 2016 Updated 13:06, 15 NOV 2016 News

mirror.co.uk

WARNING - GRAPHIC IMAGES: Clip emerges showing 'magic of the African Juju priests' publicly murdering man before apparently using their powers to resuscitate him



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A man has been filmed being "killed" by Voodoo doctors before being "brought back to life".

The video allegedly shows the magic of the African Juju priests publicly murdering the man before apparently using their powers to resuscitate him.

The footage has already gone viral on social media, being shared thousands of times.

It supposedly shows the man using a sharp blade to saw at the victim’s neck in the bizarre ceremony.



The witch doctors, clad in red and covered in body paint can be seen dancing around the body which is draped with a white cloth.

Onlookers film the scene as blood spurts into the air.

A drum is played next the body as the main man carries out the ceremony, before the injured man miraculously gets up.

The witch doctors can then be seen dancing with the bloodstained cloth that was used to cover him.

Where and when the footage was shot is unclear, although it is believed it was shot somewhere in West Africa.

The video was uploaded on November 14.

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25 Waffle Houses closed amid Hurricane Matthew — here's what that means about the storm

Elena Holodny Oct. 7, 2016, 8:09 AM 53,837
2016-10-07

businessinsider.com

BUSINESS INSIDER



waffle house

Flickr/Steve Snodgrass

Editor's Note: This post has been updated at 8:01 a.m. ET following a tweet from Waffle House indicating that several locations have been closed.

There are a bunch of unusual ways you can track what's happening in the economy.

And one of the more popular informal measures is the so-called "The Waffle House Index" — an indicator that is actually unofficially used by FEMA.

Here's the gist of it: Waffle House restaurants notoriously stay open during natural disasters. So if the diner closes during an event, that suggests it was a *really* bad natural disaster with devastating effects on the economy. And on the flip side, if it stays open and serving a full menu, damage was relatively limited.

As a historical reference point: after 2011's Hurricane Irene, 22 Waffle Houses lost power in North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. Only one wasn't open by the Wednesday after the storm passed through — a particularly hard hit location in coastal Virginia.

"If you get [to a place where a disaster hit] and the Waffle House is closed? That's really bad," said FEMA administrator Craig Fugate back in 2011.

As of Friday, 8:01 a.m. ET, Waffle House's official twitter account tweeted that 25 restaurants had been closed across Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina amid Hurrice Matthew.

Waffle House had been planning to stay open during the height of the hurricane, which was expected to hit Florida as a Category 4 hurricane. Florida Gov. Rick Scott issued a statement on Thursday warning residents living in evacuation zones to leave immediately or risk death because of the impending hurricane.

“We’re a 24-hour restaurant, so oddly enough shutting down is a big deal for us,” Waffle House’s Vice President of Culture Pat Warner told FoxNews.com on Thursday.

“When it comes to making the final decision, we let our operations team on the ground, like individual restaurant managers, make the final decision based on local conditions. But our job [as corporate officials] is to give them all the support they need to stay open.”

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The Political Use of Walking Corpses in William of Newburgh's Historia rerum Anglicarum

wordpress.com

https://stephenrgordon.wordpress.com/2016/10/17/the-political-use-of-walking-corpses/

October 17, 2016October 17, 2016 stephenrgordon

'Such things often happened in England'

This was the matter-of fact answer given to Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln (d.1200), upon hearing that a walking corpse was causing a nuisance in an unnamed Buckinghamshire village. Unwilling to follow the advice of his advisors to burn the corpse, Hugh instead ordered that a scroll of absolution be placed on the dead man's chest. Apparently this did the trick, for the revenant immediatly stopped terrorising his neighbours and loved ones.

Along with three similar stories, this episode is recorded in book five of William of Newburgh's *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (c.1198). According to William, restless corpses were also encountered in Berwick, Melrose and 'Anant' (which scholars have taken to be Alnwick in Northumberland). Not all of those who encountered the undead followed Hugh's example in absolving the deceased of whatever sins compelled him or her to walk. The residents of Berwick, concerned that their own walking corpse was infecting the town with corrupted, noxious air, decided that cremation was the only viable option, as 'shown by frequent examples in similar cases.' Religious houses were not immune to being pestered by the undead. Monks from the Cistercian Abbey of Melrose decided to burn the body of a priest who, in life, devoting more time to hunting and whoring than to the spiritual wellbeing of his flock. Having been buried in Melrose's graveyard, he became much more of a nuisance in death, rising from his tomb each night to attack his former concubine and harass the inmates of the monastery.



melrose

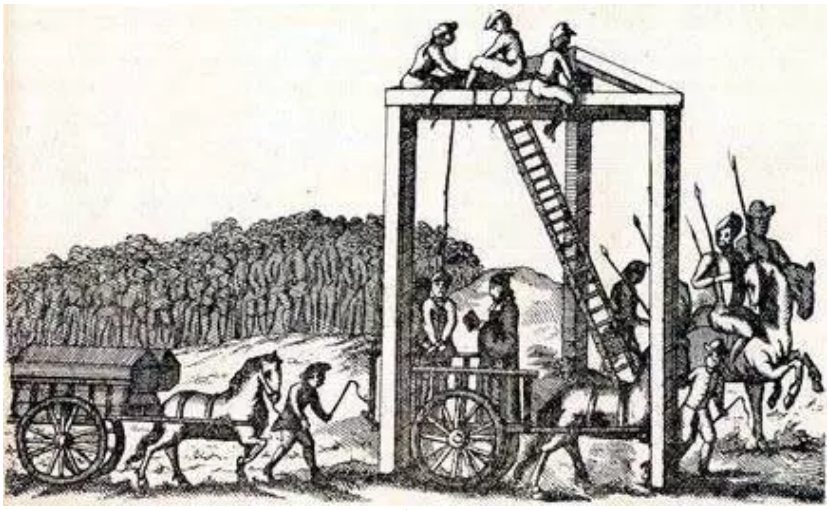
Melrose Abbey, the site of a revenant encounter in 1196 (source: Wikicommons)

As a canon of the Augustinian Priory of Newburgh (N. Yorkshire) and somewhat of a religious conservative, William is coolly equivocal as to why such entities started to appear at this time. He says he can find no reference to them in Classical literature. And yet, his oblique references to such events 'often happening in England' and that 'frequent examples [occurred] in similar cases' suggest that revenants were causing much more trouble for local communities than the scant historical references indicate. Even so, it is telling that William refers to each revenant as a 'prodigy' – that is, an entity whose appearance perhaps signified something else, something rotten, in the body-politic.

What, then, do these undead corpses signify? All four *exempla* were said to have occurred in the spring of 1196, a time of much social and economic strife in the English realm. As I discussed in a recent article for the Journal of Medieval History, William seems to be critiquing the activities of 'social revenants', that is to say, people whose political actions also caused the spread of disorder and death. It is perhaps no-coincidence that all four *exempla* follow William's account of the treasonous activities of William FitzOsbert, a Londoner who tried to enact a rebellion and was put to death for his crimes.

FitzOsbert was hanged at Tyburn gallows, London, in the spring of 1196, where he quickly began to be seen as a martyr (pictured, the gallows at it looked c.1680; source: Wikicommons)

Pointedly, the revenant narratives precede an account of a famine that overtook England and, a few chapters later, a digression on the death of the hated Chancellor of England, William Longchamp (d.1197). The *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* does not pull any punches in its description of Longchamp:



tybum

"England rejoiced at his death, for the fear of him had lain like an incubus upon her; for when he might have done much with the king, and being a man of vast spirit, could not have been forgetful of his former expulsion from England, it was evident that he would frequently plot evil against the land which had vomited him forth as some pestilential humor."

The language of disease ('corruption', 'infection', 'pestilence') suffuses the descriptions of the revenants, FitzOsbert *and* Longchamp. Wonders, *mirabilia*, are some of the more weapons in an historians' arsenal. What better way to criticise the conduct of social malcontents than through the transgressive actions of a violent, pestilential corpse? Although he didn't know exactly *why* the dead started to rise, William of Newburgh certainly knew how to put them to use.

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Wannabe weatherman started wildfire to gain Facebook views

nypost.com

By Associated Press

November 11, 2016 | 7:40pm

ATLANTA — A wannabe weatherman was jailed for arson after admitting he started a wildfire to draw attention to his selfie videos on Facebook, his town's police chief said Friday. Meanwhile, a Georgia sheriff appealed for help identifying the driver of a dark blue SUV last seen where other wildfires began. And in North Carolina, authorities suspect arson in more than 20 wildfires burning in a national forest.

"It's really too bad because he's not a bad kid — he's just misguided," said James Stephens, the police chief in Jenkins, Kentucky, where Johnny Mullins, 21, was arrested this week on a second-degree arson charge.

"He likes to do Facebook videos and have people follow him on his 'weather forecast,' so that's pretty much why he did what he did," the chief said. "He enjoyed the attention he got from the Facebook stuff."

"He didn't realize how much danger he was putting other people in," Stephens added.



People take photos of a wildfire burning near Lake Lure, N.C. Photo: AP

Modal Trigger

A teenager in Harlan County, Kentucky also was arrested for arson this week, and in Tennessee, authorities said Friday that Andrew Scott Lewis was charged with setting fires and vandalism causing more than $250,000 in damage and threatening homes outside Chattanooga.

No arrests were announced in most of the rest of the suspicious fires, which have been torching forests in and around the southern Appalachian mountains. The relentless drought across much of the South has removed the usual humidity and sucked wells and streams dry, making the woods ripe for fire.

Tens of thousands of acres have burned, about a dozen of the largest fires remain uncontained and many people to evacuate their homes ahead of fast-moving flames.

Law officers in Georgia's Rabun County suspect that someone started a series of small roadside fires Wednesday that eventually merged into the much larger blazes firefighters were working to contain on Friday, said Justin Upchurch, the county's assistant fire chief.

The Rabun County sheriff's office urged people to be on the look-out, saying the SUV was last seen in the area of the fires. The office was more emphatic in a separate Facebook post, asking residents to spread the word "and help us lock this criminal up!!!"

The area is less than 50 miles from North Carolina's Nantahala National Forest, where more than 20 wildfires that have burned more than 17,000 acres are all "being investigated for suspected

arson," forestry officials announced in a status update.

There were 14 other wildfires burning on Cherokee Nation land in North Carolina, all under investigation by local law enforcement. A fire managers' update noted that the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs is seeking information about fires on Indian lands through an arson hotline.

The U.S. Forest Service announced Friday that the entire Cohutta Wilderness, which stretches across the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia and the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, has been closed to the public due to multiple fires there.

States of emergency were declared in some of the affected areas to facilitate state and federal spending on the response.

More than 5,000 firefighters and support staff from around the nation have joined the effort, said Shardul Raval, director of fire and aviation management for the southern region of the U.S. Forest Service.

Smoke from the fires has made North Carolina's largest city a Code Orange zone for air quality, meaning anyone with breathing problems could suffer. The Charlotte Observer reports that the heavy haze and smoky conditions should make people limit outdoor activities.

That apparently isn't stopping organizers of this weekend's Charlotte Marathon. They said Friday that they do not expect the wildfire smoke to impact Saturday's races, which include a marathon, half-marathon, 5K run/walk, marathon relay and a kids 1-mile fun run.

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Squirrel enjoying a 'delicious nut' collapses in rapture

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Nov. 3, 2016 at 3:19 PM



A squirrel enjoying a snack starts to fall backward. Screenshot: SlimJones123/Imgur

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3 (UPI) -- A Redditor shared a short clip of a squirrel appearing to collapse in rapture while eating "the most delicious nut in the world."

A GIF posted to Reddit by user SlimJones123 shows a squirrel eating an object -- identified by the user as a nut, but it's difficult to make out -- and falling flat onto its back in apparent pleasure.

The squirrel appears to continue eating while on the ground, but its face is blocked by a butterfly sculpture.

"This squirrel must be eating the most delicious nut in the world," SlimJokes123 wrote.

Redditors theorized the squirrel may have become "drunk" from eating fermented fruit or vegetables.

It may also just be really, really into food.

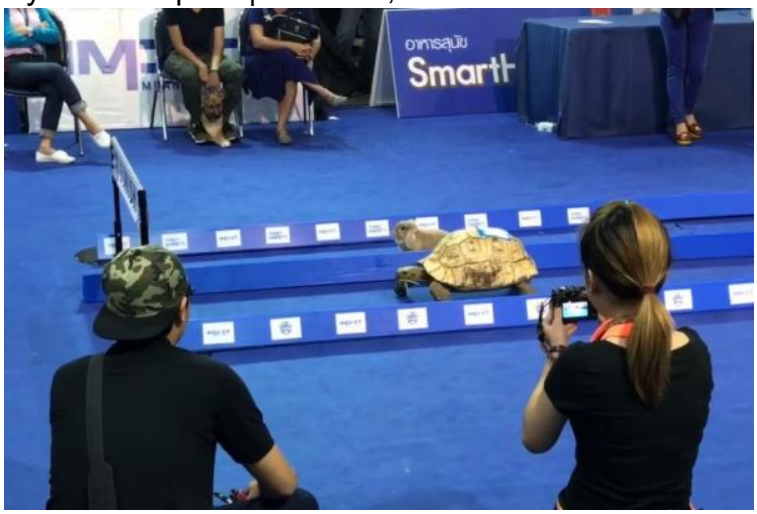
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Tortoise retains title in race rematch against hare in Thailand

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Oct. 12, 2016 at 1:45 PM



Slow and steady in the process of winning the face. Screenshot: JukinMedia

BANGKOK, Oct. 12 (UPI) -- Organizers of a pet fair in Thailand set out to resolve the millennia-old grudge match between the tortoise and the hare -- and the race had a surprising outcome.

The organizers placed the tortoise and hare on a small racetrack considerably shorter than the course in Aesop's classic fable, and the hare appeared to have an early lead despite the tortoise getting a head start on distance.

The hare appears to have the race well in hand, but ends up distracted, allowing the tortoise to repeat the performance of its forebearer in the traditional story and claim victory.

The crowd cheers as slow and steady once again wins the race.

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Dueling Was Much Less Stressful When Modified with Wax

atlasobscura.com

Prideful men could fluff their feathers without anyone ending up dead.

by Tao Tao Holmes
June 29, 2016



If only the gun that Aaron Burr fired at Alexander Hamilton back in 1804 had been loaded with wax bullets—today, the world might be a different place.

Such pistol duels were explosive gestures of pride. Often, however, the two opponents entered their duel under a mutual agreement to shoot into the air or at the ground; even if they aimed for each other, their guns were often so unpredictable that fatalities were unlikely. The practice of dueling held sway from words to swords to guns, well into the history of the American South, where it remained so popular for so long that legislators had to step in.

As it happens, for a moment back in the early 1900s, there was a sport that rendered such duels more or less benign while still guaranteeing a spectacle: wax bullet dueling. While it still involved men shooting firearms at one another, the difference here was that defeated parties could be "theoretically pronounced dead… and the supposedly fatal results created general merriment."



That was how the *New York Times* reported on the first public exhibition of wax bullet dueling in America in 1909. The duels in question took place at Carnegie Hall, with participants drawn from the Carnegie Sword and Pistol Club. The men faced off 60 feet apart, outfitted in black robes and face masks. Their regulation .44 calibre French dueling pistols were loaded with French-imported wax bullets, and the novel display enjoyed a small audience.

Wax bullet duels appear to have first emerged in France, and in the early 1900s, a "School of Dueling" was established in Paris. At the elite academy, practice duels employed wax bullets, and trainee duelers wore protective face masks, but in every other way, they followed the rules and honor codes of classic dueling. A version of the sport was even featured as a demonstration event at the 1908 London Summer Olympics, in addition to its inclusion at international pistol and revolver championships.

The wax bullets, however, were not *entirely* benign. Without adequate protection, and at closer quarters, the bullets could still lop off bits of the body, and spectators needed to be wary of any stray bullets, especially in the vicinity of their eyes.



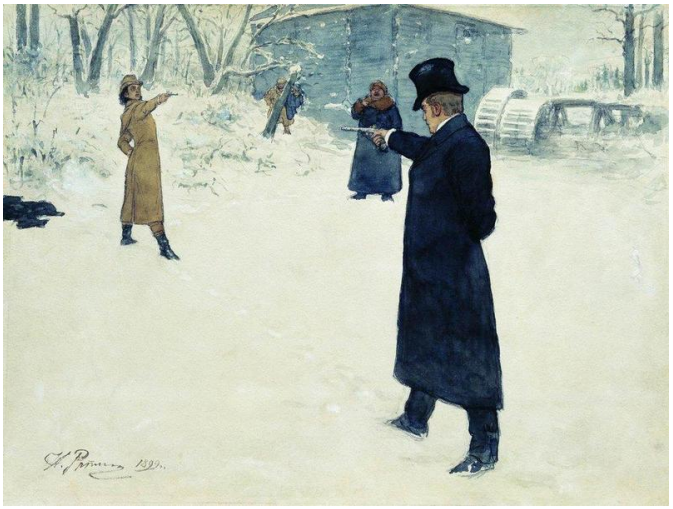
WAX FOR LEAD: BLOODLESS DUELLING AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

The sport shares many similarities with paintball, perhaps its most recognizable modern equivalent, which also requires strict protective gear. Paintball pistols might even allow for one-on-one dueling, although no one is trying to be sparing with their shots; everybody just wants to put more paint in the air.

While anyone can partake in paintball, wax bullet dueling required some skill and experience. In 1908, a wealthy British duelist by the name of Walter Winans said that only experts should take part, admitting the duels to be a trifle dangerous (the greatest danger, according to him, was a mix-up of gun cartridge contents). He also stated that impoliteness is best kept in check when the possibility of a duel—whether with sword or pistol—looms large.



But by the 20th century, gun technology had advanced past simple, single-shot, flint-lock pistols, rendering the act of dueling far more fatal than it had ever been before. The charade came to an end, even in the American South, which saw its last arrest-free duel in 1877.



Today, whether with wax or with lead, dueling is considered a ritual of the past. Many combatants who might have fired pistols at each other back in the 18th and early 19th centuries, to satisfy wounded pride, now pay lawyers instead.

While wax bullet duels have fizzled out, wax bullets themselves have prevailed. Although still obscure, they are sold on multiple websites, and you can even make them yourself. Sometimes even used in magic tricks, they are safer, quieter, and cheaper than regular bullets. Wax bullets are also preferred in fast draw competitions, which involve firing at targets, not humans.

The days of dueling are over, but the days of shootouts are not. Perhaps it would serve us well if we loaded more of our guns with wax.

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What the duck is Mortensaften?

15/09

thelocal.dk



What the duck is Mortensaften?

Agustin Millan · 10 Nov 2016, 00:21

Published: 10 Nov 2015 09:18 GMT+01:00
Updated: 10 Nov 2016 00:21 GMT+01:00

Despite being a fading celebration, on Thursday some Danes will still keep the tradition of Mortensaften alive by gathering the family to eat goose or duck.

Saint Martin's Day is celebrated each November 11th in a long line of countries, mostly as a harvest festival. In Denmark, the day is not an official holiday but many older generations will still mark the occasion with a dinner of goose or duck on the preceding evening, known as Mortensaften (St. Martin's Eve).

Denmark's celebration of Mortensaften is in honour of Saint Martin of Tours, a Roman soldier born around the year 316 who deserted the Roman army due to his Christian faith and established the first monastery in Gaul. He was later canonized as a Christian saint.

Known as Sankt Morten or Morten Bisp in Danish, St. Martin is said to have resisted his impending election as bishop by hiding in a geese pin. The honk of the birds eventually revealed his location and forced him to take the bishop’s office. Because the geese had revealed him, he asked the townspeople to slaughter a goose once a year and eat it as a form of revenge.

In Denmark, the traditional Mortensaften dinner has been celebrated for centuries. The first documents of the celebration in Denmark are from 1616 but it is believed that since the Middle Ages people ate goose and duck as an offering to the saint.

Eventually, the goose came to be replaced on Danes' dinner tables by other poultry, particularly duck. Today, the tradition hangs by a thin thread.

“I don’t think it’s a big deal. It is not an official holiday but it’s sometimes an excuse to have a good meal, mostly with your family," Copenhagen resident Frank Hansen told The Local.
Story continues below…

“My grandparents used to invite the family over to eat goose or duck. But I guess now it is regarded as a tradition only by older people," Julie Ravn told us.

While the traditional meal has nearly died out, one clear remnant of Saint Martin remains in Denmark. Both Martin and the Danish variation Morten remain incredibly popular names amongst Danish men. There are currently 37,151 Martins and 34,092 Mortens in Denmark, which ranks both names among the 15 most popular in the country.

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Sweden

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When 'energy' drinks actually contained radioactive energy

20161103

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RadiThor claimed to be a panacea for a variety of health ailments. Marie and Pierre Curie, the discoverers of radium, understood the dangers inherent in eating it, and never condoned its use in food or drinks. Radioactive drinks are no longer on the market.

Refreshingly radioactive? Drink image via www.shutterstock.com.

Modern life have you feeling frazzled? Flagging a bit as you rush through your day? Maybe you're one of the millions of consumers who lean on energy drinks to put a little extra pep in your step.

Though emblematic of our time, energy drinks aren't an invention of the new millennium. People have relied on them to combat fatigue for at least a century. Today, their "energy" typically derives from some type of neurological stimulant that makes people feel more energetic, or sometimes just sugar.

But there was a time when energy drinks actually contained real energy. The active ingredient in these drinks was radium, a radioactive element that releases a packet of radiant energy with every atomic decay. While the connection between consuming a radioactive element and reaping a perceived energy boost is tenuous at best, it didn't stop people in the early 1900s from ignoring the known downsides of ingesting radioactivity and risking the long-term health consequences.

Yum yum radium?



RadiThor claimed to be a panacea for a variety of health ailments.

Sam L., CC BY-SA

One of these energy-containing products was RadiThor. This energy drink was simply radium dissolved in water. It was sold in the 1920s in one-ounce bottles costing about US$1 each ($15 in 2016 dollars). Its manufacturer claimed the drink not only provided energy but also cured a host of ailments, including impotence. Evidence for a sexual benefit to humans was lacking, but at least one scientific paper claimed that radium water could increase "the sexual passion of water newts." For many men, in this pre-Viagra era, the water newt evidence was enough. RadiThor was a big seller.

RadiThor's most famous customer was Eben Byers, a Pittsburgh industrialist and amateur golfer of some repute. Byers first became acquainted with RadiThor when he took it to help heal a broken arm. Although the product contained no narcotics at all, Byers became at least psychologically, if not physiologically, addicted to it. He continued to consume large amounts of RadiThor even after his arm had healed. He reportedly downed a bottle or two daily for over three years, and sang its praises to all his friends, some of whom also took up the RadiThor habit.

In the end, Byers' RadiThor addiction killed him. Unfortunately, ingested radium gets incorporated into bone and all of its radiation energy is, therefore, deposited in bone tissue. Over time, the radium delivered a whopping radiation dose to Byers' skeleton. He developed holes in his skull, lost most of his jaw and suffered a variety of other bone-related illnesses. Ultimately, he died a gruesome death on March 31, 1932.

AP file photo

Relearning radioactivity lesson



Marie and Pierre Curie, the discoverers of radium, understood the dangers inherent in eating it, and never condoned its use in food or drinks.

The shame of this was that the dangers of ingested radium were already known, even before Byers started taking RadiThor. As I describe in my book, “Strange Glow: The Story of Radiation,” the medical community had been studying the health effects of radium since its discovery by Marie and Pierre Curie in 1898. British scientist Walter Lazarus-Barlow had published as early as 1913 that ingested radium goes into bone. And in 1914, Ernst Zueblin, a medical professor at the University of Maryland, published a review of 700 medical reports, many of which showed that bone necrosis and ulcerations were a frequent side effect from ingesting radium. Unfortunately, the early red flags went unnoticed, and RadiThor sales remained strong through the 1920s.

When Byers died, he was put to rest in a lead-lined coffin, to block the radiation being released from the bones in his body. Thirty-three years later, in 1965, an MIT scientist, Robley Evans, exhumed Byers’ skeleton to measure the amount of radium in his bones. Radium has a half-life of 1,600 years, so Byers’ bones would have had virtually the same amount of radium in them as they did on the day he died.

Evans was an expert at measuring and mathematically modeling the human body’s uptake and excretion of radioactivity. Based on Byers’ self-reported RadiThor consumption, Evans’ model had predicted that Byers’ body would contain about 100,000 becquerel of radioactivity. (“Becquerel” is an international unit of radioactivity.) What he found was that Byers’ skeletal remains actually had a total of 225,000 becquerel, suggesting that either Evans’ model of radiation uptake was underestimating radium’s affinity for bone, or alternatively, that Byers had actually understated his personal RadiThor consumption by a factor of at least two. It was not possible to determine which alternative accounted for the discrepancy.

Once Evans had completed his radium measurements, he returned Byers’ bones to their lead coffin in Pittsburgh, where they remain to this very day, as radioactive as ever.

A contained catastrophe

Although Byers certainly suffered from the radium in RadiThor, consumption of these energy drinks never developed into a major public health crisis. This is primarily for two reasons. Firstly, unlike Radithor, most of the other “energy” drinks on the market were total frauds and had no radium (or any other type of radioactivity) in them at all. Secondly, RadiThor and other products that actually did contain radium were very expensive because radium was a relatively rare and precious element that was costly to mine and purify. So only the wealthy, like Byers, were able to drink it on a daily basis. Consequently, RadiThor ailments were confined largely to the few who could afford to pay for it.

Ultimately, in the interest of protecting public health, the federal government closed down the Bailey Radium Laboratories – the company that made RadiThor – and radium-containing energy drinks disappeared from the consumer market by 1932.

Drink image via www.shutterstock.com.

Today, the energy drink market is occupied by drink formulations that rely on the stimulant caffeine to invigorate their customers and provide them with the enhanced “energy” that they seek. Caffeine – the commonplace ingredient in coffee, tea, chocolate and cola – may not be as exotic as radium, but it actually is a stimulant, so customers do feel energized, and it isn’t very dangerous to health.

Today’s customers seem content with these newer alternatives to radium-containing RadiThor. It’s not clear, however, whether the water newts are satisfied.

2 Comments

1. **Robert J Kolker**



Radioactive drinks are no longer on the market.

I am 80 years old. When I was younger, about ten, the shoe stores all had fluroscope machines for seeing how well the toes fitted in the shoes. The dosage from these machines produced cancers in some of the users many years down the line.

During the 20's radium toothpaste was all the rage in Germany. On a dark night one could see his teeth glow. And there were radium dial watches. The women and girsl who painted the dials sometimes died of cancer.

People really did not know at that time the dangers of ionizing radiation.

1. **Timothy J. Jorgensen**

Director of the Health Physics and Radiation Protection Graduate Program and Associate Professor of Radiation Medicine, Georgetown University

In reply to Robert J Kolker

This is very true. The public did not become fully aware of the dangers of eating radioactivity until the widespread news coverage of the fate of the radium watch dial painters. And for external radiation, it was the atomic bomb victims the shocked the public about the dangers of excessive external radiation exposure.

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Where can you see ghosts in Northumberland and North Tyneside?

By Ian Robson 18:00, 15 OCT 2016 Updated 17:23, 15 OCT 2016 News

chroniclelive.co.uk

Northumberland is well known for its beautiful countryside and its historic castles but also for its supernatural happenings

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Northumberland is well known for its beautiful countryside and its historic castles.

But it is famous among fans of the supernatural for being the home of a vampire...one of the very few places in England where the undead are said to be roam.

In the 1100s Alnwick Castle and the neighbouring town was plagued by a notorious vampire.

The Paranormal Database said: “The county is one of the few in the UK to possess an account of a vampire which terrorised a neighbourhood in the county.

“The vampire that once frequented this castle, a one time lord of the estate, lived underneath it and would emerge at night to attack the local villagers.

“An outbreak of plague was also attributed to the unholy creature, and this resulted in the villagers digging the monster up from its shallow grave and burning it.”

But not before they reported definite proof that it was a vampire.

Legend has it that the body was stabbed and spurted blood - evidence that it had feasted on the blood of the living on its night-time hunts into the town.



The Dirty Bottles at Alnwick is the location of a curse by a former landlord's wife

The story of vampires were turned into a tourist attraction at the castle.

Other ghostly goings-on in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear include:

Take care if you go to the Dirty Bottles pub in Alnwick

Not for a headless horseman, or the ghost of a sweetheart in a tragic love story that ended in death, but for the collection of bottles.

A collection of bottles on display in the pub, previously known as the Olde Cross are reportedly cursed - the last person to touch them died soon after, and now they are covered up to avoid further mishaps.

Spookily, the Paranormal Database claims the curse may still be active.

The pub’s website says: “Legend has it that, two centuries ago, the innkeeper dropped dead while interfering with the bottles in the window.

“His widow declared that anyone who did likewise would suffer the same fate. As a result, the “Dirty Bottles” were sealed between two windows and have lain untouched ever since.”

Alwinton, Northumberland, is the scene of another haunting encounter

Paranormal Database say it happened in the 1980s when a householder outside the village reported seeing the ghost of a child.

They say: “A young boy, around six years old and wearing a school uniform, was seen in the garden by someone at home here.

“The child looked solid, but disappeared near the garden gate. A local legend says that a young school boy had drowned in a nearby river.”

Felton was the scene of strange encounter when two men travelling on the A696 just outside the village claimed to have seen a figure which resembled a ‘RAF pilot’ standing on the roadside late at night.

Although the footage was poor, the witnesses said the figure was dressed all in beige and held his arm out as if hitchhiking.

When they turned the car around and drove back for another look, the figure had vanished.



Berwick upon Tweed, taken from the top of the Town Hall

Berwick has its share of paranormal activity as the story of the Woman in White shows

It was in the churchyard at Tweedmouth where the woman was spotted.

“Several locals reported seeing a phantom woman with ginger hair, dressed in white or grey, in the early hours of the morning,” says the Database

“It was said to have followed people as they left the area, while one other witness observed it reading headstones.”

Still in Blanchland, now at the Lord Crewe Arms, the ghost of sad Dorothy Foster can be seen

Dorothy’s brother escaped to France in 1715, and her ghost looks for someone who will take a message to him.

The ghost of a monk dressed in white has been seen and heard moving things around in the Radcliffe Room.

Grizelda the Highwaywoman can be seen on the roads leading to Buckton in Northumberland

It is reported that she can be seen at the end of every month perhaps recreating the time when, dressed in men’s clothing, she was riding her midnight black horse on a mission to save a friend.

She reportedly held up a stage coach carrying an execution order condemning a friend of hers, which bought him enough time to escape the noose.



Tynemouth Priory

Prior Olaf might still haunt the area around Tynemouth Priory

The Viking raider who eventually found God has been seen on the site where so much raping and looting took place.

Other phantom monks have been observed on site, several appearing to pray at a stone in the graveyard, giving the location a special place in the hearts of ghostbusters.

The former Willington Mill at Wallsend is the location of a poltergeist

Heavy footsteps are said to be just one out of many unexplained events.

The Paranormal Database said: “Just a small part of the phenomena, the footsteps were heard first. Over a period of weeks, these developed into bangs, whistling, the sounds of machinery, and finally a voice that spoke.

“Phantom animals were seen around the building. The family finally moved out, though the spirit stayed a little longer (but was much quieter).

In what might be a related incident at Willington Kitty the mill ghost was a woman killed in an accident at the mill

The worker’s hair was said to have been caught in a millstone, with her injuries killing her minutes later.

Reports suggest a strange presence and ‘spine-chilling’ ghost sightings and a millstone found during excavations has been dedicated to Kitty.

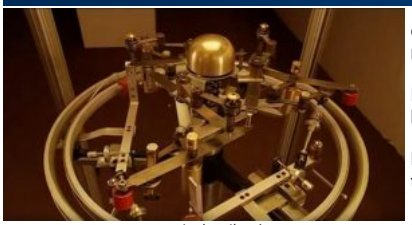
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Where Does the Power Come From?

Oct 17 2016

NEUROLOGICAblog
YOUR DAILY FIX OF NEUROSCIENCE, SKEPTICISM, AND CRITICAL THINKING



perpetual-motion-1

created by a Norwegian artist, Reidar Finsrud. He is clearly a talented, intelligent, and motivated artist. He reports that he bec many 18 hour days creating it. I do think it is a beautiful work of art and can be appreciated as such.

Finsrud, however, believes that the machine is an example of perpetual motion. At least that is the narrative of the documenta he feels like he is looking at fire, a the future, a future of free and egalitarian energy.

Perhaps that belief on the part of the artist is part of the art. It's similar to the crop circle artists who won't disclose (at least the that the mystery about the origin of the crop circles is part of the art form.

At one point in the video Finsrud asks the question, "Where does the power come from?" He recounts how many scientists he another common theme in the genre of pseudoscientific devices or artifacts. The creator or promoter seems to always recour the mystery of the object. I think this is just a form of confirmation bias. When you dig deep you find that they were not consulting the right "experts," or perhaps they were che they liked.

Also keep in mind that saying, "I don't know," is not very compelling evidence. It is only an argument from ignorance, and is only as good as the thoroughness with which one who say, "I don't know," is not enough to establish that the answer is actually unknown.

Finsrud is asking the right question – where does the power come from? His device is an elaborate machine involving pendulums and magnets, with precisely timed compone circular track. Elaborate mechanical devices are fascinating, which is part of the appeal of Steam Punk as an aesthetic, in my opinion. But no matter how elaborate the machi (that's the second law of thermodynamics) and you especially cannot get to over unity, and efficiency of greater than 100% (that's the first law of thermodynamics).

In other words, such a device can never create energy. It can only convert energy from one type to another, from one source to the kinetic energy of the moving ball. In doing you can never get to 100% efficiency.

At best Finsrud has created a machine with a very high energy efficiency. That ball can roll around the track for a very long time. Just from watching the video we can tell that around the track – that sound represents the vibration of air molecules, which takes energy. When you hear a device working what you are hearing is literally energy radiating source of energy inefficiency.

Let's get back to the question in the title of this post. That is always a great question to ask – where is the power or energy coming from? If you can answer that question ther apparent perpetual motion machine. Inventors and believers typically don't address that question, or if they do they say it is a source of energy unknown to science. They ma point energy or some type of cold fusion, but such claims are never substantiated or they are highly implausible.

They want you to think, however, that they are tapping into some new source of energy, and it is that which makes their machine work, and will one day enable them to power

In this case Finsrud's machine is of a type that is perhaps the most common in the perpetual motion game. He is using permanent magnets to make the ball continue on its p magnets out of the way so that they don't slow the ball as it passes. The rolling ball then depresses a spring which keeps the pendulums going. This system should all slowly energy to replace what is lost through friction and air resistance.

There is also, according to the video, a heavy pendulum inside the main central support that is not visible. It's possible that the heavy central pendulum is the source of power to rest and has to be started again.

There is no way, however, that simply having moving parts using gravity and magnetic fields will create perpetual motion or generate power.

Finsrud makes the same conceptual leap that all the other perpetual motion cranks make. He thinks that because he can get that ball to go around his track for a really long t way and he has a source of energy. Add a little paddle to the device, so that the ball hits it on the way around, turns an arm which rotates a turbine generator and you have e he has the efficiency of his machine up to 99% (even though the one expert they interviewed said 80-90%), then he is close to 100%. And if he can then get to 101% he is cre

That is like saying, we have a spaceship that we accelerated up to 99% the speed of light, we are just 1% away from 100%. Then we can push past to 101%, and travel throu

Just because there is not much difference in the numbers that does not mean there is not much difference in the physics. You can get to 99% efficiency without breaking any impractical), but to get that last 1% you have to break those laws, and then you have to break another law to get to 101%.

Of course, the documentary has a story to tell, and it's the same story we always hear. The lone genius laboring away in his garage, lab, studio, invents a complicated device experts are baffled. Finsrud literally keeps his device locked in a vault in his basement, because he is afraid that the powers that be will try to keep this amazing invention from

He is just one or two steps away from giving the world endless free energy. Of course those one or two steps involve breaking the laws of physics. These inventions are almo device with the arm attached, making a usable amount of energy. That's because it won't work. This is not a tedious engineering problem that time, dedication, and presumab

Sometimes devices are shown apparently powering a light or something similar. These often turn out to be frauds, however. There is a secret source of energy, hidden from t demonstrations. Sometimes the demonstrator has fooled themselves. They think the engine they have running, just to get things going, is not the real source of energy.

Conclusion

You still can't break the laws of physics. It is amazing to me that so many dedicated, talented, and skilled cranks have spend so much time creating elaborate devices that all energy from permanent magnets into the illusion of perpetual motion. They have created an art form unto itself, which part of me appreciates. But I also can't help seeing all t part of the art form – they are monuments to the crank impulse, the lonely obsession with a big idea.

They are also a reminder of why science has to be a community effort. We keep each other from turning into cranks.

33 Responses to "Where Does the Power Come From?"

1. # SteveA*on 17 Oct 2016 at 8:41 am*

   One of the YouTube commentators summed it up nicely, I think: "Perpetual motion is bullshit, if you are over 4 years old you should f***ing know that."

   I can't help feeling that his real motivation is to publicise a mechanical art installation.

But I liked his sculptures.

2. # Gotchaye*on 17 Oct 2016 at 8:59 am*

The magnets don't appear to be functioning as a source of power, really – the machine doesn't keep going because it's making use of energy somehow stored in the m pendulums to the ball. The video also says that there's a very heavy pendulum hidden inside the central stem. The pendulums are storing energy in basically the way tl

3. # phidauex*on 17 Oct 2016 at 9:58 am*

One frustration I have with the "free energy machine" obsession is that it causes the practitioners to ignore the real progress going on around them. While they make c real work is getting done, and I'm generating unlimited free energy right this moment, at commercial scale.

I'm sitting next to a newly operational 20 megawatt photovoltaic power plant that I'm commissioning (waiting for a tech to show up, which is why I'm browsing blogs). It do – after the initial cost and expenditure to build it, it goes on to produce energy with no fuel, all day every day, until it eventually wears out (35 years from now). It is a single greatest source of new electricity generation built in this country all year, exceeding natural gas, nuclear and coal.

Our next generation of plants, starting to go in now, include very large energy storage systems which allow the plants to behave just like a regular power plant – respon time baseload if needed.

Unlimited energy is already here, they just need to listen to the scientists and engineers who are actually building it, rather than the echo chamber of misguided amateu

4. # MrMaxP*on 17 Oct 2016 at 10:10 am*

I was under the impression that magnets don't lose their force by being used (note force, not energy, magnets do not contain energy), so this quote is incorrect

"There is no mystery here. The permanent magnets are the source of the power. They are also not an infinite source of power. As they are used in this fashion they wil thermodynamics are obeyed. Permanent magnets are, in essence, energy storage devices. You can get a little energy out of them, but they are not a source of endles

Or did i misunderstand this (or physics in general)

http://www.physlink.com/education/askexperts/ae472.cfm

5. # Steven Novella*on 17 Oct 2016 at 10:21 am*

Gotchaye – based on the description in the video, the ball keeps the pendulums going by rolling over a spring which gives them a little push, while the magnets keep th complex than this, but that seems like a straightforward interpretation of what's happening. It may be that the whole thing is operating off the hidden internal pendulum,

that is one of the fun things about perpetual motion devices, figuring out how they really work.

6. # SteveA*on 17 Oct 2016 at 10:40 am*

phidauex, I'm sure you're already familiar with it, but in case not, you can find a nice example of Victorian solar-power engineering here:

http://landartgenerator.org/blagi/archives/2004

7. # preby*on 17 Oct 2016 at 10:42 am*

I'm curious why this is making the rounds now. That YouTube video is four years old.

I recommend the book "Perpetual Motion: History of an Obsession", by Arthur Ord-Hume, which documents the historical fascination with these sorts of devices. If noth

Suffice to say that over the centuries, every possible combination of balls, tracks, pendulums, magnets, belts, chains, screws, bladders, water wheels, etc, etc, has bee E&M conserve energy, full stop.

8. # Karl Withakay*on 17 Oct 2016 at 11:15 am*

You seem to looking past the most obvious (and in my opinion, most likely) explanation: Intentional fraud.

RE:"The permanent magnets are the source of the power. They are also not an infinite source of power. As they are used in this fashion they will slowly demagnetize[..

That explanation doesn't really make technical sense. For one, It doesn't take that much energy to permanently magnetize the magnets, but more importantly, you're d state in your explanation. That's not how magnets & magnetism work. Consult with a physicist or mechanical engineer on that one. I feel very confident saying the ener Permanent magnets aren't batteries.

I hesitate to even speculate on how it actually works (I can think of numerous possibilities) because it would be just pure speculation, and really, we don't need an expla enough scientific understanding to know that it does not work as billed. Occasionally, someone fools themselves without realize they are providing execs external energ it's intentional deception of others on the part of the "inventor".

Also note: In practice, there's really no difference between unity and over unity: Any perpetual motion device would have to operate at technical over-unity: sound, heat above unity regardless of whether you have a scheme to usefully utilize that excess energy.

Hypothetical unity would technically only exist in a zero friction, vacuum, etc environment where there was 100% efficiency and no energy loss. In such an impossible w but it still could not do excess work beyond sustaining itself. In the real world, a machine would need to operate at over unity just to keep itself going since it is technical sound, heat, wear, etc.

9. # Steven Novella*on 17 Oct 2016 at 1:51 pm*

Karl – I did look this up as much as I could to confirm what I had previously heard. Here is one such resource: https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-source-of-energy-in-

The idea is that permanent magnets do have energy in them. It takes energy to align the magnetic dipoles. This creates a net magnetic field (as opposed to all the little u=12μ0B2

The question is, when a permanent magnet is used to do work, are some of the dipoles unaligning. I found a few sources that said yes. This may not be the definitive a

Now it is possible that in this setup the large central pendulum is really doing the work and will slowly wind down as it uses its energy to keep the ball rolling and the out

I will keep looking for a definitive reference, if you have any specific reference please post it.

10. # Gotchaye*on 17 Oct 2016 at 2:58 pm*

Steve –

Right, there's energy in the alignment of magnetic dipoles inside a permanent magnet, but you can't discharge it like a battery to do useful work. I expect that if you act permanent magnet you're not going to get a very impressive number.

Suppose the track and magnets didn't move and you just had a magnet sitting next to a rail while a ball rolls past. The magnet does work on the ball as it approaches /a difference in the ball's speed – it speeds it up coming in and slows it down on the way out. Putting your hand in between them as the ball gets close isn't going to do an

This device is moving the magnet towards the track when the ball is far away and away from the track when the ball is very close, so that the magnet speeds up the ba away. But the magnet is attracted to the ball too! So it takes more work to move the magnet away from the track when the ball is right next to it than the magnet gains b the attractive force is stronger on /both/ the ball and the magnet when the ball is close. That's where the trade-off here is – you can use the magnet to give the ball a bo magnet to move it away from the ball so that it doesn't slow the ball down.

11. # Steven Novella*on 17 Oct 2016 at 3:13 pm*

Gotchaye – that makes sense, so the magnet is transmitting the energy, but is not the ultimate source of the energy, whatever is moving the magnet is the source of th

This is where it gets interesting, because Finsrud says the pendulums move the magnets, the magnets keep the ball rolling, and the rolling ball through springs keeps t leaching away from the system through friction and air resistance.

So – does the system just slowly wind down, too slowly to notice over the shooting of the video, or is there another source of energy that replaces what is leaching awa

I am still trying to find a definitive source on the question of do permanent magnets have energy. There seems to be no question that there is energy in the magnetic fie energy into the system and that energy exists in the resultant magnetic field. I understand this is a tiny amount of energy, but why can't you get some of that energy out

In other words, a permanent magnet is a high energy state. There is potential energy in keeping those little dipoles lined up. If the dipoles flip back to their low energy s eventually to zero net field as the dipoles completely randomize.

So – what am I missing?

12. # Gotchaye*on 17 Oct 2016 at 3:45 pm*

I think the question is "how are you degrading the magnetic field"? The dipoles aren't unaligning /in order to/ attract a metal object. When you pick something up with a because you've altered the field lines (largely outside of the magnet), and then you get all that back when you pull the object away from the magnet because now there the magnet is having to unalign dipoles like burning fuel in order to pull something in and then when you pull the object away you're causing the dipoles to align again. because it's a minimum of the potential energy – two bar magnets next to each other really want to face the same way.

Mostly we unalign dipoles by using a more powerful magnet or by heating something up. I guess if you put a magnet in an insulated box and waited forever the box wo weaker.

13. # Karl Withakay*on 17 Oct 2016 at 3:51 pm*

Gatchaeye beat me to it. I was going to say the same basic thing.

"So – does the system just slowly wind down, too slowly to notice over the shooting of the video, or is there another source of energy that replaces what is leaching awa

Are you still taking the video and the words of its creator at face value? Parsimony suggests there is intentional deception in play here.

14. # Gotchaye*on 17 Oct 2016 at 3:51 pm*

Sorry, it's not right that the dipole alignment is a minimum of the potential energy. I don't know what I was thinking there. Bar magnets try to face opposite directions. Bu

15. # Karl Withakay*on 17 Oct 2016 at 3:53 pm*

https://van.physics.illinois.edu/qa/listing.php?id=432

"Q:
The law of conservation of energy says energy can't be created or destroyed. So what's the deal with permanent magnets? They spend energy attacting ferrous mater what was spent to attract?
– Sammy
Michigan
A:

Why do you say that magnets 'spend energy' attracting magnetic materials? If the material is attracted to the magnet and moves closer to it, the magnetic potential ene toward the Earth and the gravitational potential energy goes down. Now if the object is stopped somehow (say by friction) that energy turns into thermal energy, just like

If something (e.g. you) then pulls the object away from the magnet, then that's what supplies some more energy to the system- the same as how you have to supply er

16. # Karl Withakay*on 17 Oct 2016 at 4:08 pm*

To cave in and speculate just a little, probably the simplest way to fake this would be to have motor actuated magnets or switched electromagnets hidden in the base to

Somewhere, there are almost guaranteed to be hidden electromagnets, motors, &/or servos.

17. # Karl Withakay*on 17 Oct 2016 at 4:14 pm*

…with their own power sources.

18. # Karl Withakay*on 17 Oct 2016 at 4:15 pm*

Technical nitpick: Your supplied equation (u=12μ0B2) from your Quora link is for energy -density- of a magnetic field, not net energy contained in a magnetic field.

19. # daedalus2u*on 17 Oct 2016 at 4:40 pm*

Energy can be extracted from a magnetic field, usually in two ways; when something with a high magnetic susceptibility displaces something with a low magnetic susce is the force of attraction, the difference in energy between a high susceptibility material in a field (low energy) and something with a low susceptibility in a field (high ene measure of the energy change.

The other way is that material can demagnetize and as the magnetic field collapses that energy can be extracted.

There are ways to make a heat engine based on the change in magnetic susceptibility with temperature. That is being reversed to make refrigeration equipment that is

There are transients involved in magnetic attraction, where there is hysteresis and losses, but these would only be dissipative.

One way that some magnetic perpetual motion machines work is by using an electromagnet that is “noisy” and so has an AC component of magnetic fields and that AC energy transfer from the “noisy” electromagnet to the static system.

You could have a DC voltage between the rails, and that would generate a net current through the ball which would generate a net magnetic force.

There are clocks that operate by using slow variations in temperature or air pressure as a source of power.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atmos_clock

20. # Steven Novella*on 17 Oct 2016 at 4:51 pm*

daudalus – sounds like it is technically possible, but not with this setup. so in this machine the magnets are probably not providing any net energy to the system, is that motion machines. Do any of them power off the magnets?

Karl – I usually don’t assume people are cheating. It is about equally likely that they are self-deceived, so I usually consider both options as possible. For perpetual mot they are probably con artists. If not, they are probably self-deluded cranks.

My impression from this guy is that he is a self-deluded crank, although it is also possible this is all performance art.

21. # Karl Withakay*on 17 Oct 2016 at 5:59 pm*

Never attribute to malice that which can adequately be explained by stupidity?

When it comes to perpetual motion machines, If it gets far enough along for me to see it, I usually initially assume cheating while being open to the possibility of self de research and testing claimed, degree of direct involvement by the claimant, etc.

In this case, it seems unlikely to me that self deception is the case as it seems the machine cannot function as -described-, and most of the likely means by which it cou not revealed on the part of the builder.

If you have a device plugged in, but claim it’s just for startup power and you have the power switched off, it’s very possible you didn’t evaluate your circuits enough to se purely mechanical device with a hidden motor & battery/ electrical connection, that’s hard to justify as self deception.

22. # Aceofspades25*on 18 Oct 2016 at 9:21 am*

I think your answer is probably wrong and you should have consulted a physicist first before posting this.

There isn’t a whole lot of energy stored in magnets – almost certainly not enough to keep this machine running for years. See here for example: https://van.physics.illin

Another point is that once it is stored in a magnet, it’s fairly hard to make the magnet lose the energy.

Finally and most importantly is the theoretical point here: perfect magnetic fields are conservative fields which exert conservative forces. That means the net work in m back to where it started will be 0j by definition and so that will make 0j of energy available to the machine to run.

See here: http://www.physicsinsights.org/magnetic_motors_1.html (“Magnetic Fields Do No Work”: The Lorentz Force Law), (Permanent Dipole in a Permanent Dipole

Now I don’t know whether it is the case that some permanent magnets in practical applications may not generate fields which are perfectly conservative but even if they little, that would still make very little energy available to the machine.

23. # ccbowers*on 18 Oct 2016 at 10:18 am*

“But I also can’t help seeing all the lost time and effort in such devices. Perhaps that is part of the art form – they are monuments to the crank impulse, the lonely obses

I don’t worry too much about the time and effort in creating these things by the creator. A person who does these things would have spent them on a few more sculptur spent that time in front of a television at sporting events, religious events etc.

The time that is truly wasted is that attention that these things get by the public, in which journalists, people making documentaries, and scientists go and entertain thes

24. # Steven Novella*on 18 Oct 2016 at 11:48 am*

Thanks for all the feedback. I have updated the post to reflect this feedback and my subsequent research. I removed the reference to the permanent magnets being a pendulum is the secret source of energy, that would be the simplest explanation.

25. # Karl Withakay*on 18 Oct 2016 at 12:44 pm*

“I do suspect that the central hidden pendulum is the secret source of energy, that would be the simplest explanation”

Possibly, but the claims that he consulted with numerous scientists and they could not explain where the power comes from and the that it was observed for 3 days with and that something (externally powered) is probably driving the mechanism, perhaps through providing impetus to that suspiciously hidden central pendulum.

It’s telling that the “senior university lecturer in physics” in the video was seen to observe and comment on a video of the device in action rather than being able to obse being shown an edited single camera video of a magic trick and being asked to explain the trick.

No matter how massive that hidden pendulum may be (and given the total size of the device, there’s a practical limit on this), I can’t buy that it could drive the device fo watch this device in action, the more I’d have a hard time buying anything more than a few minutes of operation without an external energy source before winding dow

I took enough mechanical engineering courses in college to cry shenanigans here.

26. # Karl Withakay*on 18 Oct 2016 at 5:57 pm*

When it comes to purely mechanical (non electrical) perpetual motion machines, I give more consideration to self deception for things in the on paper design stage tha model that runs for 3 days stage like this one, especially ones with slickly produced Youtube videos.

27. # johnmarley*on 18 Oct 2016 at 9:00 pm*

This reminds me of my favorite summary of the Laws of Thermodynamics (I do not remember where I first read it):

1st Law: You can’t win
2nd Law: You can’t break even
3rd Law: You can’t quit the game.

28. # BillyJoe7*on 18 Oct 2016 at 11:25 pm*

johnmarley,

0th Law: You must play the game.
1st Law: You can't win.
2nd Law: You can't break even.
3rd Law: You can't quit the game.

C.P.Snow

https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Thermodynamics

29. # daedalus2u*on 19 Oct 2016 at 3:45 pm*

The site of the museum where it is located seems to be near several rail lines.

There could be vibration from passing rail cars that recharge the system periodically.

I have a post still in moderation (it had two links) that indicate ground vibrations could be significant.

https://www.google.com/maps/dir//Galleri+Finsrud+-
+Bilitt,+Osloveien+272,+1449+Dr%C3%B8bak,+Norway/@59.7218161,10.3090189,55941m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m9!4m8!1m0!1m5!1m1!1s0x46414383bebd362d:0xf7da4
hl=en-US

30. # daedalus2u*on 20 Oct 2016 at 9:57 am*

I have divided my previous post with 2 links which seems to still be in moderation into two separate posts to get past the spam filter.

There might be some extraction of tidal energy, or energy from the rotation of the Earth (more difficult), or energy from fluctuations in the Earth's magnetic field.

What I think is most likely is extraction of energy from ambient sound or ground vibrations.

This article (figure 7) shows levels of vibration in buildings that are perceptible and which can be annoying.

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0003682X0200052X?np=y

To extract "enough" energy, there would likely need to be at a resonance at about the same frequency as the energy source. You could get a resonance by difference b
natural frequency of the pendulum, and the resonant frequency of the spring/mass system. That could be what the set-up does, extract energy from vertical motions of

31. # Steven Novella*on 20 Oct 2016 at 4:27 pm*

I saw one device that used temperature differences to flex metal as a source of energy.

There are many possible subtle sources of energy. That is why devices that show a tiny effect cannot just be "scaled up." We only see demonstrations of tiny effects be
intentional or not.

32. # Karl Withakay*on 20 Oct 2016 at 4:59 pm*

Come on Steven, all we have to do is scale up the famous drinking bird and we can eliminate global warming and put the oil companies out of business.

33. # RickK*on 20 Oct 2016 at 6:01 pm*

The standard really should be changed. It is too easy to make something that stays in motion for a long time, even if it isn't perpetual. So disproving the "free energy" p

New rule: If your machine doesn't accelerate, don't bother.

You must be logged in to post a comment.

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type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

Tugboat Wisconsin

blogspot.com

http://whereinthemilami.blogspot.com/2009/01/tugboat-wisconsin.html

Friday, January 23, 2009

Tugboat Wisconsin



I drove along Canal Street and spotted the tugs waiting the winter out in the Menomonee River. You have to love the tugboat. Perhaps it's due to *Scruffy the Tugboat* book that I read as a kid, but you really have respect for these little boats and the amazing jobs they do. Seeing a little tugboat hauling in a massive Great Lakes freighter is really fascinating. The strength and power is phenomenal. And this tug is really special because of its name - Wisconsin.

Some people claim that this tugboat is haunted. In 1941 it sunk in the Detroit River coming to the assistance of a grounded Great Lakes freighter, The B.F. Jones. Six men lost their lives. The tugboat was brought to the surface and restored. Now there are men who won't sail her. There have been strange noises and incidences where valves are open when thought to be closed. In a story from JS Online - a crew was bringing the boat back from Chicago when one of the men was joking and making remarks about "the ghost". He questioned why the ghost wasn't down running the engines. All of a sudden the engines died. Mechanics later found water in the fuel supply even though the lines were sealed...and the engines had been running just fine for nine hours. Oooh...I don't know.

Posted by KBC at 1:14 PM

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Who's Afraid Of John Saul? Urban Culture and the Politics of Desire in Late Victorian London

jhu.edu



Project MUSE

London in the nineteenth century is a crucial site for the emergence of an ethos of individuality and of a milieu hospitable to male same-sex desire. Historians debate when modern homosexual "identities" and subcultures may be said to have appeared. Some follow Michel Foucault in emphasizing the shift from sodomy as a discourse of acts to homosexuality as defining a kind of person in the discourses of sexology. Materialist historians underline the increased mobility and urbanization of capitalist industrial societies in Western Europe and North America, leading to the development of urban settings in which anonymous men could satisfy desires unrecognized by conventional social forms. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has demonstrated a developing schism in norms of masculinity that required the construction of boundaries between a dominant male homosociality and a threatening homosexuality policed by increased displays of homophobia. This period in England was also marked by agitation for reform associated with radical politics and a rigorous morality linked to a rising middle class. 1

In this essay I offer a "thick description," drawn from personal memoirs and correspondence, records of court proceedings, press accounts of notorious sex scandals, and a pornographic novel, of distinctively urban forms of life shared by men who desired sex with other men. This effort at social phenomenology is meant to explore connections among same-sex desires, fantasies, and practices; personal identities and forms of association; and public and legal responses to minority sexualities. I focus on the three decades prior to the trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895 to map an urban landscape of erotic life in which diverse human types interacted in a shared sexual underworld. 2 Some of these types manifest personal characteristics long familiar in the ethical discourses of early modern Europe, whereas others may mark the emergence of a distinctively modern homosexuality. 3 Same-sex **[End Page 267]** desire was subject to extensive social and legal regulation, which raises questions as to what threats it may have posed. As Foucault emphasizes in regard to modern sexual science, dominant discourses generate counterdiscourses. Ascribed identities were taken up and transvalued by those they sought to stigmatize. I explore the interplay between ascribed roles and modes of self-understanding that arose from practices associated with the desire for other men. Political in the broadest sense, these processes are characterized by struggles for power and recognition. Such social conflict in modernity is profoundly reflected by the vicissitudes of an emergent "sexual subject."

This essay begins with John Addington Symonds (1840–93), whose work exemplifies the sustained reflection and self-fashioning of one for whom negotiating same-sex desire was a paramount concern. His account of London experiences leads to a broader investigation of a sexual underworld where social reality and personal fantasy intersect. I examine press coverage of the Boulton and Park case of 1870–71 and the text of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain; or, Confessions of a Mary-Ann*, a pornographic novel published in 1881, to illuminate this urban landscape and the characters who dwell there. Finally, I turn to John Saul, the "Mary-Ann" of the novel but also a historical personage who testified in the Cleveland Street affair of 1889–90. The essay is organized around four scenes of male cruising in Victorian London. They display practices of sexual commerce on the streets of Soho, in the park and alleys at Leicester Square, and in established brothels. This glimpse of "darkest London" reveals privileged men "slumming" in a demimonde inhabited by sexual "professionals" and apparently exempt from the dominant moral and gender norms of the day. Sexuality here was imbricated with gender, social class, economic status, and nationality. The variety and complexity of forms of life on display in these materials complicate conceptions of identity grounded in sexual practices and social roles by emphasizing the centrality of patterns of moral sentiment, erotic fantasy, and intimate association in shaping a self. Rather than exhibit fixed identities maintained by well-policed social boundaries, they display a queer landscape of permeable and shifting borders, ongoing personal transformation, and cultural contestation. 4

The Subject of Desire

> A wonderful man is Addington Symonds—someways the most indicative and penetrating and significant man of our times. Symonds is a curious fellow. I love him dearly. He is of college breed and education—horribly literary and suspicious and enjoys things. A **[End Page 268]** great fellow for delving into persons and into the concrete, and even into the physiological, the gastric—and wonderfully cute.

—Walt Whitman

In the spring of 1865 twenty-five-year-old John Addington Symonds, who had moved to London with his bride of some months, was living in Albion Street near Hyde Park. 5 Walking home from an evening out with friends, Symonds passed through an alley that joined Trafalgar with Leicester Square and took him past some barracks. In evening dress, Symonds was approached by a "young grenadier" who spoke to him:

> I was too innocent, strange as this may seem, to guess what he meant. But I liked the man's looks, felt drawn toward him, and did not refuse his company. So there I was, the slight nervous man of fashion in my dress clothes, walking side by side with a strapping fellow in scarlet uniform, strongly attracted by his physical magnetism. . . . he broke abruptly into proposals, mentioned a house we could go to, and made it quite plain for what purpose. I quickened my pace, and hurrying through the passage broke away from him with a passionate mixture of repulsion and fascination. 6

This episode was by no means Symonds's first encounter with his desire for other men. 7 Indeed, the memoirs in which this tale appears reveal that he was conscious of intense erotic fantasies about men from early in his childhood. These desires coexisted with a relentlessly moralizing consciousness. During his schooldays at Harrow he keenly disapproved of the sexual antics of other boys while recognizing the direction of his own yearning. He later played an active role in securing the dismissal of the headmaster, C. J. Vaughan, for his involvement with one of the students. At the urging of an Oxford don in whom he had confided, Symonds informed his father, a distinguished physician; the elder Symonds used persistent threats of public exposure to drive Vaughan from a promising career in education and the church. The boy who had told young Symonds of his affair with Vaughan never spoke to him again. 8

As he approached adulthood, "Johnny" repeatedly found himself in love with younger men. He courted a chorister from Bristol Cathedral with whom he exchanged caresses and love letters, even a kiss. Confiding in his father, he was warned off on the grounds that such a friendship across class boundaries could only result in unhappiness for both. 9 At Oxford, with no social distance to separate them, Symonds continued to develop crushes on other men, courting them in pursuit of romantic friendship. He was well aware of the sexual component of his interest. **[End Page 269]** Symonds's writings reveal that some of his friends routinely indulged such appetites and that his own urges were strong. 10 His election as a fellow of Magdalen College was compromised by the campaign of an acquaintance, who circulated excerpts from Symonds's private letters and poems that appeared to express his sexual interests in other men. Although cleared of any wrongdoing, Symonds had to defend himself at a meeting of the college where two of his letters were "strongly condemned." 11 The personal crisis provoked by this scandal contributed to the ruin of his health. At his father's direction, Symonds sought medical advice and excruciating "treatment" to overcome his desires. He threw himself into the project of marriage "on Doctor's order's" (Papa's as well) in the hope of escaping their powerful grip. 12 Still, Symonds could write of his meeting the grenadier : "The thrill of contact with the man taught me something new about myself. I can well recall the lingering regret, and the quick sense of deliverance from danger, with which I saw him fall back. . . . The longing left was partly a fresh seeking after comradeship and partly an animal desire the like of which I had not before experienced" (187).

If Symonds were already aware of his desire for other men and of its intensely sexual nature, what did he discover in this brief encounter? What precisely was "the lingering regret"; from what "danger" had he been delivered? Symonds illuminated the matter with another London scene. Walking through "the sordid streets," gripped by an ill-defined depression, Symonds met not a man but an image: "At a certain corner, which I well remember, my eyes were caught by a rude *graffito* scrawled with slate-pencil upon slate. It was of so concentrated, so stimulative, so penetrative a character—so thoroughly the voice of vice and passion in the proletariat—that it pierced the very marrow of my soul." In the margin of his manuscript Symonds was explicit: "'Prick to prick, so sweet'; with an emphatic diagram of phallic meeting, glued together, gushing" (187n). He interpreted his response as follows: "The wolf leaped out: my malaise of the moment was converted into a clairvoyant and tyrannical appetite for the thing which I rejected five months earlier in the alley by the barracks." Symonds had hoped that his marriage and hard work would banish such longings. But they had returned even more strongly: "The vague and morbid craving of the previous years defined itself as a precise hunger after sensual pleasure, whereof I had not dreamed before save in repulsive visions of the night" (187–88). Such "visions" had haunted him from his earliest years. Now his desires were reflected back to him by other men abroad in the city and inscribed on its very walls; his yearnings seemed to walk the streets beside him. Later

Symonds read this moment as a revelation of relentless needs with which he must "constitute a working compromise": "I know that **[End Page 270]** obscene *graffito* was the sign and symbol of a paramount and permanent craving of my physical and psychical nature"(188). 13 His effort to make sense of his desire for other men lasted a lifetime, producing a body of work that stands as the first sustained defense of male same-sex desire in English. 14

Symonds imagined his *Memoirs* as a case study for a future, less prejudiced generation. Rather than simply adumbrate "modern homosexuality" or contemporary gay identity, this work makes itself available for queer appropriation. Given the open texture of the writing, and the broad range of material it encompasses, we may read it as a palimpsest displaying diverse forms of human desire and erotic relation. Symonds's accounts are pervaded by ambiguity and division. They resist modernist conceptions of the unified text and liberal dichotomies between private and public; they require more supple interpretation. Symonds published important books anonymously but corresponded freely and widely about their subject matter; he quoted from his diaries in letters to friends and from these letters in his diaries. The text of the *Memoirs*, left for his literary executor finally to shape, includes excerpts from his own diaries and letters and from his wife's diary, letters to himself from his friends, and poems published and unpublished. His output was prodigious, amounting to over thirty books, voluminous diaries and poetry, and more than four thousand letters. 15 He articulated multiple shifting perspectives animated by urgent moral questioning. Symonds persistently situated desire in processes of individual self-making and cultural interpretation, charting recurrent dynamics of restraint, expression, and sublimation.

What light do the urban scenes above shed on Symonds's efforts to forge an ethic of desire? What happens if we read them as exemplary tales? Divisions proliferate in his account of meeting the young grenadier. The encounter develops through contrasting images of the "strapping fellow in scarlet uniform" and the "slight nervous man of fashion in . . . dress clothes"; they are bound together by the commercial interest of the one and the attraction felt by the other. Symonds cannot close the deal: torn by a "passionate mixture of repulsion and fascination," he rushes away. His departure settles nothing: he continues to feel both relief at his "deliverance from danger" and "lingering regret." What does he want? He is split between "seeking after comradeship" and "animal desire." What about the grenadier? This icon of masculinity and object of desire sharply interrupts the erotic fantasy by speaking for himself, making Symonds an offer he cannot afford to accept. Not yet. Symonds offers his reading of the graffito as a gloss on his encounter with the man. The social distance between them becomes explicit: the drawing on the wall is "the voice of vice and passion in the proletariat." The virility of the object could not be more evident: "'Prick to prick, so sweet'; with an **[End Page 271]** emphatic diagram of phallic meeting, glued together, gushing." But the mutuality of satisfaction is undercut by imagery embedded in Symonds's description: the drawing has "so penetrative a character . . . that it pierced the very marrow of my soul." The compromise to masculinity and social status in imagining oneself the object of a proletarian penetration generates anxiety. Symonds's desires overwhelm him: "The wolf leaped out . . . a clairvoyant and tyrannical appetite." He seeks to clarify his vague malaise as a "precise hunger after sensual pleasure," but it is not so easily contained. In a previous letter deflecting a friend's expression of feeling that Symonds does not return, he links his inner conflict with a dilemma inherent in reciprocal male love:

> If you yearn after the grace etc wh you seem to see in me, I admire the generosity, unselfishness, purity of imagination, & sympathy with good wh I know you to possess. Externally grateful, I am inwardly at war—the sport of a hundred wild desires wh you probably have never felt. This will explain why I love to have you near me. You do me good by giving me what I have not got. If I have at times felt your society irksome it is because my nature is at root male & passionate—I do not want to have strong affection given me wh I cannot return in kisses & all else that belongs to love—& great kindness suggests to the beast within me ineffable desires.
>
> (1:444) 16

Earlier in the letter he states baldly, "I am not a woman." He does not appear able to imagine reciprocal love without an asymmetrical division of roles. Symonds had already experienced the difficulty of negotiating boundaries not only between acceptable and unacceptable desires but also between himself and other men. Where did romantic friendship end and shameful vice begin?

The streets of London proclaimed "the sign and symbol" of his own deepest desires and offered opportunities to meet others who shared them. Symonds's evocation of the "wolf" within suggests a classic version of Foucault's

"repressive hypothesis": one might read these urban scenes as forcing Symonds to confront an inner truth denied by the society in which he lives. 17 But it is not that simple. What about the "seeking after comradeship"? Is it no more than a disguise assumed by prohibited homosexual appetites? The year before his London experiences, Symonds confessed to feeling locked in "a continual battle, in wh the one thought ever present was 'Oh that I cd get Love, that I cd cease to be alone, or die!' in wh the outer world at last came rudely like a great blast of wind to make my strife more arduous and painful, opening my secret parts to daylight & imposing on me scornfully the burden under wh already secretly and by myself I was staggering." **[End Page 272]** "Inwardly," his desires were at war: they collided not only with social barriers but with each other. Commenting on a painting by Simeon Solomon, Symonds wrote, "[He] might make a better picture of Amor and Libido: Lust dying of the breath of Love." 18 The "outer world" of the city opened his "secret parts to daylight" only to expose an inner chaos.

These episodes dissolve the simple opposition between subjective desire and external repression. The world invites and solicits, shapes and directs, as well as denies desire. Not simply an array of objects, it is a place where one meets others with desires of their own. The dynamic at work here could be profoundly unsettling. It was one thing for Symonds to acknowledge inner wishes to be suppressed, quite another for a virile fantasy to invite him to a house of assignation. Scenes of casual but reciprocal attraction transformed Symonds's erotic universe and him along with it. The world became an arena of exciting possibilities where men could acknowledge and pursue their interests in each other under the most unlikely circumstances: "I remember, for example, today, as though it had been yesterday, how several years ago a young man in a shirt and trousers, stretched upon a parapet below the Ponte di Paradiso at Venice, gazed into my eyes as I moved past him, lifted his head, then rose upon his elbows, and followed me till I was out of sight with a fixed look which I shall remember if we meet in the next world." 19 In the same mood he declared: "I long to meet with a man, a comrade, the first face and hand responsive to my own. Why? I do not know." 20 These passages come from letters written home during a trip on the Continent—to his wife. Something more complicated than closeted homosexual desire is at work here. Symonds did not know what he wanted; I am not convinced that "we" know better than he. Would everything have ended happily ever after if he had been able to settle down with the boy on the Ponte di Paradiso (!)? Is it so hard to imagine him writing the same letter home to a male partner that he wrote to his wife? Is there something inherently restless about erotic love that resists domestication? 21

Although Symonds is best known for his promotion in England of conceptions of "sexual inversion" articulated by Continental sexologists, he was a complex product of the elite education of his day. His apologies for same-sex desire drew on a variety of ethical and cultural discourses. At one level his work attempted to integrate a Hellenistic ethic of noble pederasty with conflicting paradigms of bourgeois morality, modern subjectivity, political democracy, and empirical science. 22 Even the diaries and letters incorporated into the *Memoirs* were shaped by literary tradition. In his youth Symonds kept his copy of Plato's *Phaedrus* on the shelf by his bed, alongside the *Confessions* of Augustine. 23 The passage in which he admitted his inner turmoil concluded: "Out of this History I have **[End Page 273]** often thought that, if I lived to do nothing else, I should write confessions wh w. be better for the world to read than Rousseau's and not less interesting. I sometimes think I am being trained for this." 24 Symonds began that work in 1889 as the self-conscious consequence of translating the autobiographies of Benvenuto Cellini and Count Carlo Gozzi from the Italian. We cannot simply contrast these writings with his theoretical and historical work, as if they constituted the raw material of "experience." Symonds's ongoing self-examination manifests the turn to "subjectivity" that Foucault identifies as central to sexual science and modern power. Symonds's comment on his own poetry might be applied to all his work: "I find it wholly impossible to say anything that is not grossly autobiographical."

Learned and eclectic, driven by a relentless will to self-understanding and self-justification, Symonds ransacks the heritage of Western civilization for acceptable models of same-sex desire. Although he sometimes writes as if his desire for other men were the burdensome secret and abiding problem of his life, his work precedes and helps establish the firm divide between homosexuality and heterosexuality. His own problematic is more confused and more comprehensive than that dichotomy allows. 25 Same-sex desire may be noble or base, spiritual or carnal, intensely romantic or casually pleasurable, ethically inspiring or morally corrosive, love or lust. The desiring subject is divided among diverse and often conflicting impulses: toward romance, friendship, excellence, knowledge, service, pleasure, power. The aspirations that fuel the highest human accomplishments cannot be separated from the temptation to base indulgence. 26 Erotic love is an ambiguous phenomenon, with the potential to do great good or evil. 27 Symonds usually places himself squarely on the side of sublimation. 28

Symonds sometimes divides the world between those men who love men and those who do not. But he also divides “Arcadian” love between those for whom it is a vehicle of aspiration and those for whom it is an itch to scratch. Symonds’s attitudes reflect both his Protestant upbringing and the “moral purity” movements of his time: his judgments of ethical failings in erotic matters can be lacerating. 29 Despite his affiliations and advocacy, the moral impulses that dominate his work unsettle conventional divisions between “us” and “them” no matter how congenial they sometimes appeared to him. Symonds worked to produce alternative models of same-sex desire to those available in Victorian culture, such as the aristocratic, corrupt “sodomite” or the vulgar, cross-dressing “Molly.” 30 His own ideals vacillated uncertainly between a middle-class respectability that sought to domesticate same-sex desire within the moral norms of his class and a more radical vision of male comradeship that transcended social division toward democratic equality. Like other students at public schools and elite universities in Victorian England, **[End Page 274]** he was powerfully influenced by his study of Greek culture. 31 It was not enough for Symonds to show that forms of same-sex desire were accepted in classical Greece; he insisted that they were central to its highest ethical aspirations. 32 The risk of corruption was not restricted to same-sex desire; just as Platonic love was entangled with the risk of sodomitical vice, medieval courtly love was tied to adulterous attachments. 33 Sometimes Symonds sounded a note of terrible caution, as when he attempted to convince Benjamin Jowett, master of Balliol College, that teaching Plato’s erotic dialogues to undergraduates was dangerous. 34 Contemporary readers may easily become impatient with his moralizing, but one Victorian gentleman urged a former boyfriend to read Symonds’s *Life of Michelangelo* because it “walk[ed]—oh, so nimbly—over the forbidden ground of the friendships with Thomas Cavalieri and others.” Reginald Brett described Symonds as “extraordinarily audacious” and worried about the effects of his behavior on his character. 35

Symonds sought to translate his Hellenism into a distinctively modern context. Like many contemporary thinkers, such as his friends Henry Sidgwick and T. H. Green, he took the absence of belief in a personal God as the condition of his time and was preoccupied with the question of what might replace it as the foundation of morality. 36 He was drawn to the transcendentalism of Plato’s *Symposium* but cited *Phaedrus* too, with its more tolerant view of sexual expression and its analysis of the soul divided against itself. Symonds’s understanding of desire was deeply implicated in his religious skepticism: the dynamics of erotic love became for him the locus of ethical aspiration. Desire was to fill the void left by the failure of faith. Self-division took on an erotic color. The beloved objects were not eternal forms but powerful images: “I am afraid of forming a permanently divided consciousness in my own mind, of being related to this world of phantoms, & moving meanwhile in the world of fact. But the phantoms are so beautiful to me and so real.” 37 The man who could not help writing autobiography tried to flee from such an imperial self in search of what might be greater. 38 Symonds could not accept the elitism of ancient ethics, arguing that male desire worked to unmask not only individual denial and social repression but also conventional forms of inequality. 39 The meeting of desiring gazes across a social distance might hold the promise of political transformation. Symonds celebrated the “Calamus” section of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* for showing the way toward a democratic ethos of male comradeship. He wrote to Edward Carpenter, the socialist and feminist who lived openly with his male working-class partner: “The blending of Social Strata in masculine love seems to me one of its most pronounced, & socially hopeful, features. Where it appears, it abolishes class distinctions, & opens by a single operation the cataract-blinded eye to their futilities. In removing the film of prejudice & education, it **[End Page 275]** acts like the oculist & knife. If it could be acknowledged & extended, it would do very much to further the advent of the right sort of Socialism” (3:808). For Symonds, however, these utopian moments were always situated in an ongoing struggle to forge a self and share a common life. His code name for the love of men that he shared with so many of his friends was “Arcadian,” but he also called it “l’amour de l’impossible.” 40

Symonds’s *Memoirs* have been read as a tale of unnecessary suffering, as in Grosskurth’s *Woeful Victorian*, or of salutary progress toward sexual liberation, interrupted by an untimely death. He sought to chart a course that led beyond the anxiety and self-laceration epitomized in the two early incidents on the London streets. As he grew older, Symonds became more open with his friends, more adventurous in seeking sexual satisfaction, and more engaged in efforts at law reform. However, self-division and moral conflict ran as deep in him as his desires for other men. Another encounter in London more fully explicates Symonds’s policing of his own desires. Returning from Switzerland to give a lecture there in 1877, he went with a friend to a male brothel near the Regent’s Park Barracks. Once again the object of desire was in uniform: “Moved by something stronger than curiosity, I made an assignation with a brawny young soldier for an afternoon to be passed in a private room at the same house.” 41 Their meeting became another turning point in Symonds’s erotic education: “We came together at the time appointed; the strapping young soldier with his frank eyes and pleasant smile, and I, the

victim of sophisticated passions. For the first time in my experience I shared a bed with one so different from myself, so ardently desired by me. . . . For him . . . it involved nothing unusual, nothing shameful; and his simple attitude . . . taught me something I had never before conceived about illicit sexual relations." What lesson did he learn? "Instead of yielding to any brutal impulse, I thoroughly enjoyed the close vicinity of that splendid naked piece of manhood; then I made him clothe himself, sat and smoked and talked with him, and felt, at the end of the whole transaction, that some at least of the deepest moral problems might be solved by fraternity" (253–54).

The two men met again several times during the London visit, but, Symonds insists, "without a thought of vice." He concludes, "The physical appetite of one man for another may be made the foundation of a solid friendship, when the man drawn by the friendship exhibits a proper respect for the man who draws" (254). Ambivalence and asymmetry mark Symonds's account of his breakthrough. He emphasizes not only the social difference between himself and the prostitute but also the imbalance in their interests: Symonds is moved by passion, the other by economic need and sociability. For Symonds, sexual expression remains in tension **[End Page 276]** with fraternity. His respect for his partner restricts the range of permissible sexual practices. Although Symonds does not say, anal intercourse seems precluded regardless of their roles; it is somehow "brutal" and vicious. Furthermore, he maintains a notion of complementarity in love that mirrors a conventional gendered dichotomy between active and passive, top and bottom, lover and beloved. This division applies to intensities of feeling as well as to sex roles, posing a threat to the masculinity of partners who reciprocate same-sex love. Symonds seems never to have found an acceptable model of mutual male love.

Symonds's ambivalence extends to the institutional context that enables the kind of cross-class intercourse that he celebrates. The male brothel provides an environment free of conventional barriers to social interaction and the expression of manly desire. He draws an astonishing comparison: "I also seemed to perceive that, within . . . that lawless godless place, permanent human relations—affections, reciprocal toleration, decencies of conduct, asking and yielding, concession and abstention—find their natural sphere: perhaps moreso than in the sexual relations consecrated by middle-class matrimony." He finds no violation of "natural sentiments" here, only a collision with the constraints of law and convention. Symonds's mood swings violently in a single paragraph: "Was this a delusion?" He acknowledges that he left the place with a sense of "disgust" but insists that, although he has had the same response to brothels that housed women, he has never found in them the satisfactions offered by that "strapping young soldier with his frank eyes and pleasant smile." "From him," Symonds declares, "I learned that natural male beings in the world were capable of responding to my appreciation of them. A dangerous lesson, perhaps" (255).

What about Symonds's marriage? It is hard to miss the personal implications in the claim that the male brothel is a more fertile setting for natural feeling than middle-class marriage. The complexity of his relationship with Catherine North is the subject of another essay entirely, but they seem to have enjoyed a significant friendship for much of their lives. His letters to her appear candid and soul-searching; he includes several of hers to him as well as passages from her diaries among the texts assembled for his memoirs. 42 Her account of their courtship reveals that she was deeply and romantically in love with "Johnny," who was three years her junior. Symonds's description of the early nights of their marriage is a stinging rebuke to the inadequacies of sex education for the Victorian middle class. Soon after the incident in the London brothel, and after the birth of their four daughters, they ceased to have sexual relations altogether. I do not completely trust Symonds's account, but it is possible that Catherine shared his difficulties in integrating love and lust: "I separated from my wife with her approval; **[End Page 277]** for the sexual side of marriage had never been for her more than a trouble. She disliked childbirth, and had, I think, no constitutional difficulties to overcome. In truth our married life had long been ill-arranged upon the ordinary basis of cohabitation. We had taken precautions against pregnancy; and our intercourse in this respect was by the need I felt for sexual outlet." 43 Symonds acknowledged that the denial of this "outlet" caused him considerable anguish but claimed that it strengthened the marriage ties: "It placed me upon a sound and true relation to my wife—that of pure and faithful friendship." The tension between comradeship and sexual intercourse applied to Symonds's relations with other women as well as with men. He was capable of friendship with women and sometimes turned to female prostitutes for sexual satisfaction, but despite intense effort early in life, Symonds never felt the passion for women that even casual encounters with men could evoke. Shortly after his decision to stop having sex with his wife, he reported how powerfully the sight of a tipsy "Tyrolese pedlar" urinating by the road stirred his desire: it "shot through me with a sudden stab. . . . if only I could follow him, and catch him there, and pass this afternoon with him upon the sweet new hay" (260–61).

Symonds continued to insist that the sexual expression of his desires for other men be integrated in fuller personal and social relationships. His failing health led him and his family to move to Davos, Switzerland, where he devoted considerable energy to developing erotic relations with European men. He also traveled regularly to Italy, where he found the men especially attractive. These adventures "abroad" recall those of earlier aristocratic figures, like William Beckford and Lord Byron, who traveled to the Mediterranean to satisfy desires forbidden at home. 44 Conscious of the risks of exploitation in these relations, Symonds worked to establish ongoing friendships, often colored by financial patronage. He helped the family of a Swiss acquaintance, Christian Boul, through their business difficulties and later befriended and became the lover of Angelo Fusato, a Venetian gondolier whom he took on trips to London and whose presence embarrassed Symonds's more timid friends. Eventually he persuaded Fusato to settle down and marry the mother of his children, after which Symonds supported the family for many years. These relations, however they flourished, were never free of anxiety. Explicitly contrasting him with the soldier in the London brothel, Symonds wrote of Boul: "I have never enjoyed a more sense-soothing and more elevated pleasure than I had with him—sex being nowhere. . . . A spy might have looked through cracks in the doors upon us; and the spy would have seen nothing reprehensible." 45

Despite his insistence on forming long-term friendships and taking on **[End Page 278]** social obligations toward them, Symonds remained cognizant of the role that fantasy played in shaping these connections. He described a glimpse of Boul: "When he rode towards me, standing erect upon an empty wood-sledge and driving four stout horses at a brisk trot down a snow slope, I seemed to see an ancient Greek of the Homeric age, perfect in *sophrosyne* and unassuming power" (263). Of his first meeting with Fusato, to whom he devotes an entire chapter of his *Memoirs*: "This love at first sight . . . was an affair not merely of desire and instinct but also of imagination. He took hold of me by a hundred subtle threads of feeling, in which the powerful and radiant manhood of the splendid animal was intertwined with sentiments for Venice, a keen delight in the landscape of the lagoons, and something penetrative and pathetic in the man" (272). The ambiguous pairing of these final adjectives suggests that Symonds's imagination transformed his sense of himself as well: "In these waking dreams I was at one time a woman whom he loved, at another a companion in his trade—always somebody and something utterly different from myself" (273). In the charting of his erotic odyssey, Symonds's moralizing drive to domesticate desire coexisted with the persistent elaboration of fantasies, both romantic and transgressive. 46

Sodom on the Thames

> In the last two years or so there have been some major changes in the West End, largely centred on Old Compton Street in Soho. . . . London has finally got something that other cities take for granted, it's [*sic*] own gay village. . . . Every action has a reaction, and there is a certain trend nowadays to speak disparagingly of "Old Compton Street Queens"; meaning mindless fluff-bunnies who have nothing better to do than consume and cruise while the rest of us are paying the bills/fighting Aids/attempting to do something about the most ridiculous legal system in Europe. Like all stereotypes, there is a certain amount of truth in this one, but it cannot be denied that there is something very empowering about being able to walk down a street in broad daylight, knowing that not only every third person, but also every fifth and sixth, is probably gay.
>
> —Ron Eddy

The presence of sites where men might enjoy erotic encounters with other men was not new in London in the 1860s. However, the sexual underworld may have become more accessible then to men like Symonds who did not set out deliberately **[End Page 279]** in search of it. Its enhanced visibility reflected both the proliferation of urban forms of life and the emergence of a heightened consciousness of erotic possibility among middle-class men. Reading Symonds's encounters in their full context unsettles any easy division between private and public domains, between personal desire and social practice. The urban landscape he charted was at once erotic fantasy and social reality. "Molly clubs," venues in which men looking for other men gathered, date back to the beginning of the eighteenth century. 47 In them same-sex desire joined with gender inversion as men wore women's clothes, took women's names, and "married" other men, at least for an evening's entertainment.

When these figures "came out" of protected enclaves and began walking the streets openly, both the social scene and the persons who inhabited it were transformed. Customary assumptions about gender and sexuality, domesticity and desire, commerce and pleasure, were called into question. The *Yokel's Preceptor*, a London publication of the 1850s, warned visitors to the city of new dangers, whetting the appetites of those with

unconventional tastes or restless desires: “The increase of these monsters in the shape of men, commonly designated margeries, poofs, etc., of late years, in the great Metropolis, renders it necessary for the safety of the public that they should be made known. . . . Will the reader credit it, but such is nevertheless the fact, that these monsters actually walk the streets the same as whores, looking out for a chance!” 48 The guide identified parts of the city that offered such sights and opportunities, including the Strand, the Quadrant, Holborn, Charing Cross, Fleet Street, and St. Martin’s Court, and mentioned individuals who plied their trade there; one of them, known by a woman’s name, kept a “fancy woman” of his own. The author painted a vivid portrait of gathering places, appearances, and distinctive gestures: “They generally congregate around the picture shops, and are to be known by their effeminate air, their fashionable dress. When they see what they imagine to be a chance, they place their fingers in a peculiar manner underneath the tails of their coats, and wag them about—their method of giving the office” (120–21). It is hard to imagine Symonds responding to such a sign as he did to the young grenadier or the phallic graffito. Nonetheless, the spectacle of Victorian London offered and inspired a variety of erotic possibilities.

The most notorious manifestation of the newly visible intersection of gender transgression and same-sex desire was the case of Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park in 1870–71. 49 Known to their friends as “Stella” and “Fanny,” these young men, sons of a stockbroker and a judge, respectively, frequented theaters, restaurants, and shopping arcades in women’s clothes, often surrounded by other young men. Arrested, along with a male admirer, as they exited a theater in drag, they were made to submit to a police search of their rooms and the confiscation of a **[End Page 280]** large quantity of apparel, jewelry, photographs, and personal letters. The police surgeon subjected the two to an intrusive physical examination analogous to that authorized for suspected female prostitutes by the Contagious Diseases Acts. 50 After a hearing in the Bow Street Magistrate’s Court, they were charged with and tried for “conspiracy to commit the felony” of sodomy.

Boulton’s and Park’s letters seemed to reveal the existence of a coterie that shared a coded language and played fast and loose with gender identities; they raised suspicions about deviant desires and sexual practices. Police tracked two of their correspondents to Edinburgh, where similar searches led to their indictments as well. Witnesses were produced who had seen Boulton and Park in drag at the annual Oxford-Cambridge boat race on the Thames and at a fancy dress ball. They had been ejected from the Burlington Arcade, the Alhambra Theater, and other public places because of the attention they attracted. Witnesses in court claimed to have believed them women and to have responded to them as especially flagrant—and especially attractive—female prostitutes. 51 By the time of their arrest, the police had had them under surveillance for over a year.

This period witnessed increased agitation about the visibility of prostitution in England’s cities and anxiety about the scourge of venereal disease. 52 Explicitly sexual opportunities in public spaces were taken to threaten bourgeois domesticity and moral virtue, literally embodied in women whose “painted faces” disguised the contagion they carried. 53 To these threats Boulton and Park added subversion of the “natural” order of sex and gender. Indeed, the man arrested with them testified that when he had first met them, they were wearing men’s clothes, but he had taken them to be women in disguise and had refused to believe their protestations to the contrary. Whatever had gone on in the “Molly clubs” of an earlier day, Boulton and Park’s public drag performances were not yet clear signals of male-male desire. Of course, there is no reason to accept their admirers’ self-serving statements, given under the threat of prosecution. Their transgressing of norms or, at least, their ambiguous manifestations of gender may have been among their principal attractions.

This coterie’s way of life and intimate relations were subject to intense and protracted public scrutiny. The legal theory under which these scions of respectable upper-middle-class families were charged was so problematic that a detailed record was kept of their trial at Kings’ Bench before the lord chief justice. 54 The trial included not only eyewitness accounts of the public behavior of the transvestites but conflicting medical evidence as to their physical condition and the bodily effects of repeated acts of sodomy; the reading and contested interpretation of their private letters; reports from landladies and domestic servants about their living **[End Page 281]** and sleeping arrangements; and testimony from Boulton’s mother and Park’s father about their sons’ personal histories and financial standing. All of it was reported in detail in major newspapers, including the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and *Reynolds’*. The *Times* headlined its coverage “Men in Petticoats.” The illustrated papers included vivid portraits of the two men both in and out of drag. (By the time of their trial, they appeared as well-dressed young men about town; Park had even grown a moustache.) Quite a lot was made of the assertion that Boulton had lived as the wife of a young member of Parliament, carrying visiting cards that announced him as “Lady Arthur Clinton.” 55 Boulton and Park’s willingness to flout respectable conventions went far—so far that they defended themselves as high-spirited, theatrical swells carried away by a lark.

The public attention paid to Boulton and Park suggests that the appearance of men in women's clothes out and about in London was a novelty. Cross-dressing was not yet established in the public mind—or in anybody's professional opinion—as an indication of same-sex sexual desire. In charging the defendants with "conspiracy to commit the felony" of sodomy, rather than the less serious offense of cross-dressing, the prosecutor undertook to establish that link. The defendants offered evidence of their longtime interest in theatrical performances, in which both had taken women's roles. The well-financed defense team called eminent professors of medicine to testify to the innocence of the men's bodily condition and to challenge "expert" testimony on the effects of repeated acts of sodomy. The prosecution failed to make its case. After spending over a year in jail, Boulton and Park were acquitted of all but the least serious charges against them. Those in attendance cheered. Boulton fainted.

Why did the crowd roar its approval? Were they convinced of the defendants' innocence? Or were they complicit in the successful subversion of legal authority? Readers of these materials today find it hard to accept that Boulton and Park were just ordinary young men with an extravagant sense of fun. The gay writer Neil Bartlett seems almost to regret their acquittal as a sign of society's refusal to recognize the reality of their alternative way of life. 56 Their letters reveal a complicated nexus of relations among men with a shared sensibility and appreciation of sexual ambiguity. One admirer praises Park as "Lais and Antinous in one," invoking both the classical courtesan and the beloved of the emperor Hadrian. Boulton apologizes to a friend for his "campish ways." 57 We do have the response of one contemporary witness. The painter Simeon Solomon, soon to be arrested with another man for sexual offenses committed in a public toilet, wrote to Algernon Swinburne after a day at the trial: "There were some very funny things said but nothing improper except the disgusting and silly medical evidence of which I heard **[End Page 282]** but very little." He reported that "I saw the writer of those highly effusive letters. He looks rather humdrum." After the morning session Solomon "was ravenous and went to the nearest restaurant," where he met the defendants and their lawyers: "Knowing the solicitor, I sat down with them, which as it was a public crowded room, I had no hesitation in doing. B——n is very remarkable. He is not quite beautiful but supremely pretty, a perfect figure, manner and voice altogether. I was agreeably surprised at him." Despite the fear of opprobrium implicit in his explaining why he did not hesitate to join them for lunch, Solomon predicted: "Of course they will be acquitted." 58

Clearly, the response to the trial was not unified. Much of its drama derived from the publicity given to the forms of life enjoyed by a distinct community at odds with dominant social mores. We cannot say how large or small the minority may have been; moreover, its members also participated in the amorphous "general public." In fact, there were multiple audiences for the Boulton and Park trial, with their own perspectives and interests. 59 In addition to the widespread newspaper coverage, penny pamphlets retailed the story; their titles included "Men in Petticoats," "The Lives of Boulton and Park: Extraordinary Revelations," and (my favorite) "Stella, the Star of the Strand." The ambiguous reception of Boulton and Park extended beyond contemporary representations. They were immortalized in a limerick:

> There was an old person of Sark Who buggered a pig in the dark; The swine in surprise Murmured: "God blast your eyes, Do you take me for Boulton or Park?" 60

Further, they must be among the very few figures in social history to appear in a published work of pornography. Even without Symonds's insight into the conjunction of imagination and opportunity on the streets of London, we find ourselves in a domain where social reality and erotic fantasy intertwine.

The Sins of the Cities of the Plain; or, Confessions of a Mary-Ann was privately and anonymously printed in London in 1881. 61 It opens with the narrator's account of his encounter with John Saul of Lisle Street, the eponymous "Mary-Ann," whom he met in Leicester Square. The succeeding chapters purport to be based on Saul's account of his life. John Saul is a central figure for my analysis. In the Cleveland Street affair of 1889–90 a man with that name came forward to give statements to police and to testify in court. On the witness stand he described himself as a "professional sodomite." There is more than a passing resemblance **[End Page 283]** between the historical individual represented in the official papers and press accounts and the character in the novel. However, *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* should not be taken as the story of anyone's "real life." 62 Rather, it maps a Victorian sexual underworld in a way that underlines the difficulty of separating the exaggerations and projections of fantasy from documentary representations of social reality. At the same time, the fact of its publication demonstrates the existence of an audience willing to pay well to share the fantasies it retailed. 63

A bit like the manuscript of Symonds's *Memoirs*, *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* does not conform to modernist canons of literary unity. It starts out, traditionally enough, with the narrator providing a frame that introduces the recollections of the male prostitute who is its central figure. The structure breaks down, however, as Saul interpolates the stories of others he meets along the way. By the end of the book, "essays" are tacked on with no connection to the picaresque narrative: "The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts," "A Short Essay on Sodomy Etc.," and, perhaps surprisingly, "Tribadism." 64 The introduction resonates with the urban encounter that so disrupted Symonds's equilibrium in 1865. We may read it as showing what might have happened had a less timid Symonds acted on the impulses from which he fled. Further, the narrator's pickup of the Mary-Ann mirrors the historical Saul's account of meeting a noble lord in Piccadilly and taking him back to 19 Cleveland Street for sex. More generally, it is a plausible rendering of the practices and fantasies of gay cruising in a London setting, where similar, though less discreet, encounters may still be observed today:

> The writer of these notes was walking through Leicester Square one sunny afternoon last November, when his attention was particularly taken by an effeminate, but very good-looking young fellow, who was walking in front of him, looking in shop-windows from time to time, and now and then looking around as if to attract my attention.
>
> Dressed in tight-fitting clothes, which set off his Adonis-like figure to the best advantage, especially about what snobs call the fork of his trousers, where evidently he was favoured by nature by a very extraordinary development of the male appendage, he had small and elegant feet, set off by pretty patent leather boots, a fresh looking beardless face, with almost feminine features, auburn hair, and sparkling blue eyes, which spoke as plainly as possible to my senses, and told me that the handsome youth must indeed be one of the "Mary-Ann's" of London, who I had heard were often to be seen sauntering in the neighbourhood of Regent Street, or Haymarket, on fine afternoons or evenings.
>
> (1:7–9 [7–8]) **[End Page 284]**

The erotics of the scene are unambiguously homosexual and phallic. The Mary-Ann is descended from the Molly of earlier decades, but the full feminine drag that marked her appearance—as well as that of Fanny and Stella—has been reduced to the more subdued "pretty patent leather boots" that show off "small and elegant feet." Otherwise the attribution of effeminacy is linked to characteristics of youth. Saul might be the androgynous ephebe that is the object of pederastic fantasy but for the bulge in the "fork of his trousers." Thus Saul combines features of femininity and hypermasculinity. In part he expresses a Victorian tendency to see flagrant sexuality as itself a feminine characteristic. 65 A later comment by Freud on Greek love suggests another interpretation of this configuration: "The sexual object is not someone of the same sex, but someone who combines the character of both sexes; there is, as it were, a compromise between an impulse that seeks for a man and one that seeks for a woman, while it remains a paramount condition that the object's body (i.e., genitals) shall be masculine." 66 The account in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* augments this ambivalence. First announced as a natural endowment, the lump in Saul's trousers by its very prominence leads the narrator to wonder if it is "natural or made up by some artificial means." 67

The perspective shifts unsteadily between Saul's attributes and their effect on the cruising gaze. The ambiguous bulge especially mobilizes the narrator's interest: "All this ran through my mind, and determined me to make his acquaintance, in order to unravel the real and naked truth" (1:9 [9]). He follows his quarry into a shop that displays photographs of scantily clad females (recalling the "picture shops" mentioned in the *Yokel's Preceptor*) and makes his move: "I asked him if he would take a glass of wine. He appeared to comprehend that there was business in my proposal, but seemed very diffident about drinking in any public place" (1:10). Saul knows the game: "Why do you seem so afraid to say what you want?" (1:11 [11]). Like Symonds's grenadier, he prefers a direct approach. Soon they are off in a cab to the narrator's chambers. 68

Their meeting is free from the constraints of social class and economic status; it occurs in a largely male world, where each is free to gaze openly on the other and to act on agreements negotiated between them. The narrator conflates his sexual interest with the pursuit of truth, which slides from getting a look at and a feel of his partner's endowment toward discovering what makes the Mary-Ann tick. Eventually he will pay Saul to write the story of his life. This move resonates with Foucault's contention that "modern sexuality" is held to provide the key to the "inner truth" of an individual life. We might also read the foregoing passage as a parody of Symonds's insistence on later meetings with the soldier from the brothel for fraternal conversation rather than for sex. Such

sublimation is quite alien to the **[End Page 285]** pornographic vision of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*. In the privacy of his rooms, the narrator (named "Mr. Cambon," according to the "little plate" on his door) can witness the truth of the matter at first hand:

> "You seem a fine figure, and so evidently well hung that I had quite a fancy to satisfy my curiousity about it. Is it real or made up for show?" I asked.
>
> "As real as my face, sir, and a great deal prettier. Did you ever see a finer tosser in your life?" he replied, opening his trousers and exposing a tremendous prick, which was already in a half-standing state. "It's my only fortune, sir; but it really provides for all I want, and often introduces me to the best of society, ladies as well as gentlemen. There isn't a girl about Leicester Square but what would like to have me for her man, but I did find it more to my interest not to waste my strength on women; the pederastic game pays so well, and is quite as enjoyable. I wouldn't have a woman unless I was well paid for it."
>
> (1:12–13 [12])

As a sexual "professional," Saul is available to both men and women, constrained only by considerations of spermatic and monetary economy. The fictional Mary-Ann clearly takes pleasure in his work. Further, it introduces him into "the best of society." He appears proud of his contacts with "ladies as well as gentlemen." In response to Cambon's interest, Saul agrees to relate the story of his life over several weeks at "a fiver a week" for "thirty or forty pages . . . tolerably well written" (1:19 [16]). The two conclude with an evening of sexual gymnastics described in detail, including masturbation and fellatio, Saul's beating of Cambon with a birch, and the narrator's anal penetration of the Mary-Ann. Although the latter act maintains the positioning suggested by the client's greater age and his social superiority, the flagellation is more ambiguous. The other practices are mutual, with Cambon taking considerable interest in Saul's phallic satisfaction. The feminization at work in the original encounter is undercut by the reciprocity and versatility of their sexual engagement.

Cambon's account of the genesis of his text ends on a note that should give pause to the historian in search of verisimilitude: "At each visit we had a delicious turn at bottom-fucking, but as the recital of the same kind of thing over and over again is likely to pall upon my readers, I shall omit a repetition of our numerous orgies of lust, all very similar to the foregoing, and content myself by a simple recital of his [Saul's] adventures" (1:25–26 [23]). Like a campy latter-day Scheherazade, Saul must entertain his patron (and *his* readers) with tales of erotic **[End Page 286]** adventure and "orgies of lust" so diverse and imaginative that their prurient interest will not "pall." Saul's narrative moves from the country and suburbs to London and presents its hero in ever more complex and transgressive situations. However phantasmatic the elaboration, the scene is recognizably the London of the 1870s. Among its distinctively urban settings are a private-membership club where wealthy patrons and cross-dressed male prostitutes with feminine names have orgies with multiple partners; a dress ball at a private hotel where Boulton and Park make a guest appearance and fancy gowns are raised to reveal the male organs of the belles; and streets and squares where "rough lads" and soldiers sell sexual services for money and occasionally rob or blackmail their clients.

The novel's portrayal of both soldiers and transvestites as prostitutes illuminates the phantasmatic potential of Symonds's meeting with the grenadier and the promenades of Boulton and Park with their admirers. Throughout *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* sexual desires and practices confound conventional expectations linked to gender and social class. The historical reality of these transvestites is invoked by reference to an event widely reported in accounts of their trial: "You remember the Boulton and Park scandal court case? Well; I was present at the ball given at Haxell's Hotel in the Strand" (1:96 [89]). 69 Saul reports that Boulton "was superbly got up as a beautiful lady and Lord Arthur was very spooney upon her" (1:97 [89]). At the trial Lord Arthur Clinton was said to share a household with Boulton, who styled himself as his lady. In the novel Saul follows the couple to one of the dressing rooms, where he spies through the keyhole. One detail should delight the student of intertextuality. The fictional Saul recounts that he had "a famous view of all that was going on in the next room. It put me in mind of the two youths which Fanny Hill relates to have seen through a peephole at a roadside inn" (1:98 [90]).

Anxiety about being observed in the commission of sexual acts seems to be an aspect of the pervasive concern for maintaining appearances. One may recall Symonds's assurance that anyone spying on him and Boul would have seen "nothing reprehensible." Of course, in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* the point is precisely to

expose these hidden things. Boulton is “Laura,” not “Stella,” but the drag name and costume are conjoined with a male organ that commands the attention of both her lover and the randy spy: “His lordship quickly opened Laura’s thighs, and putting his hand into her drawers, soon brought to light as manly a weapon as any lady could desire to see” (1:100 [91]). Lord Arthur then performs fellatio on his partner with great enthusiasm prior to anally penetrating her. Saul, who leaves before the encounter reaches its climax, is later introduced to the couple and to Park, here “Selina,” not “Fanny.” At this point in his narrative Saul **[End Page 287]** reveals that he too was in drag and was introduced by the proprietor as “Miss Eveline” (1:105 [93]). At the end of the evening, Eveline goes with Laura and Selina to their flat, where “I believe the people of the house thought that we were gay ladies,” that is, female prostitutes (2:8 [94]). Of course, a threesome is in the offing.

First Laura regales her friends with a tale of seduction in which the inversions of sex, gender, and desire multiply at a dizzying rate. The object of desire was a “Miss Bruce,” a female “milliner” whom Laura enticed to her place by promising to buy a new dress from her. Laura also promised her guest pleasure without the risks that accompanied sex with men. “Blushingly” explaining that she suffered from “a malformation, something like the male instrument” (2:14 [97]), the transvestite managed, after mutual oral sex, to engage in vaginal intercourse with the milliner, who had been gulled with the assurance that she would not be penetrated by a penis. Laura concludes, “She will be very lucky if she does not get a big belly” (2:19–20 [100]). Excited by the tale, Selina and Eveline join her in an orgy of mutual masturbation, birching, and anal sex, during which Eveline penetrates Selina while being herself penetrated by Laura.

If the transvestite prostitutes and Mary-Anns mimic and confound expectations concerning feminine behavior and desire, the soldiers perform similarly in relation to masculinity. Fred Jones, whom Saul meets as a fellow prostitute at “Mr. Inslip’s” establishment in the novel, emphasizes the links between prostitution and the military that are displayed in Symonds’s *Memoirs*: “‘We all do it. . . . It’s the commonest thing possible in the Army. As soon as or (before) I had learned to goose-step, I had learned to be goosed, and enjoy it, my dear, don’t you, Jack?’ he said, slapping his thigh and passing his hand over my most interesting member. ‘Now, I’ll tell you all about it. We’ll keep ourselves fresh for tonight, but another day I mean to both fuck you and have you fuck me’” (1:83–84 [80]). Jones’s sexual interests in other men are not simply mercenary, as his proposition to Saul reveals. Symonds reaches similar conclusions about the soldiers he has enjoyed. Writing to Carpenter in 1893, he reports: “I made the acquaintance last autumn in Venice of a Corporal of the 2d Life Guards who was traveling with a man I knew. He gave me a great deal of information. But it all pointed to the mercantile aspect of the matter. However, he said that some men ‘listed on purpose to indulge their propensities. An Italian Colonel told me . . . that young men of the best families, after serving as volunteers or in the natural course of conscription, would sometimes remain on in the ranks with a view to the opportunities afforded by barracks.” 70 The role switching in anal intercourse that Jones, a former guardsman, proposes to Saul does not comport with standard accounts of “butch” guardsmen anally penetrating their clients or permitting themselves to be fellated: it reminds **[End Page 288]** us that we can only speculate about what went on between them. Jones, proving as adept at the erotics of narrative as Saul himself, continues his seduction of our hero with the tale of his own initiation into male sex by his colonel. He claims that his experience was representative:

When a young fellow joins, someone of us breaks him in and teaches him the trick; but there is very little need of that, for it seems to come naturally to almost every young man, so few have escaped the demoralization of schools or crowded homes. . . . Although we all do it for money, we also do so because we really like it, and if gentlemen gave us no money, I think we should do it all the same. Many of us are married but that makes no difference. . . . all the best gentlemen in London like running after soldiers, and I have letters from some of the very highest in the land. 71

It is taken for granted that members of the armed forces are devoted to prodigious sexual activity among themselves and for pay and that their schools and slums have prepared them well for it. Special venues facilitate the exchange: “There are lots of houses in London where only soldiers are received, and where gentlemen can sleep with them” (1:89 [83]). Jones’s gender presentation is complex: “I have had lots of women, but do not care so much for them, for they do not make half so much of us as gentlemen do, although of course they always pay us. You can easily imagine it is not so agreeable to spend half-an-hour with a housemaid when one has been caressed all night by a gentleman.” Partly the difference is in the capacity to pay, the men being better off, but the social distance is eroticized as well. Is there also inversion in the suggestion that macho guardsmen really want to be “caressed all night by a gentleman”? The text underlines the gender bending: after proposing mutual anal intercourse to Saul and regaling him with tales of social climbing, Jones takes on the role

of lady's maid and helps him get dolled up for Mr. Inslip's party before donning drag himself. The soldiers display the same versatility as the transvestites; Jones is both.

The Sins of the Cities of the Plain moves through scenes of increasingly exotic and transgressive activity, including incest, miscegenation, pedophilia, and bestiality. Many of these scenes feature both men and women, even a cow. They emphasize the mixing of apparently respectable aristocratic and middle-class clients with male prostitutes who may be in full feminine drag or military uniform or who, like Jones, do both. The extent to which the text reflects social practices is questionable, but it does illuminate the phantasmatic urban landscape of Victorian gentlemen seeking alternatives to a more domestic sexual regime. 72 This **[End Page 289]** erotic imaginary cannot be simply assimilated to today's highly visible gay culture. In 1992 Masquerade Books brought out *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*. Although it nowhere identifies an editor or acknowledges its source, the book is for the most part an adaptation of the 1881 text. It retains the original structure and most of the language, adds scenes here and there, and changes details in some others. One revision, consistently pursued, stands out: all of the women are changed into men. Maids become handymen; secretaries, clerks; stepsisters, brothers. Even the milliner who thinks that she is having a lesbian encounter with Laura is transformed into a man. This version of the scene includes some very puzzling details, given the gender switch, and the prospect of a "big belly" is omitted entirely. The publishers seem to find the Victorian novel just too queer for today's market in gay pornography. The original is an epic of polymorphous pansexuality and gender fuck.

A Matter of Class

> Mr. Wilde has again been writing stuff that were better unwritten; and while "The Picture of Dorian Gray" . . . is ingenious, interesting, full of cleverness, and plainly the work of a man of letters, it is false art—for its interest is medico-legal. . . . The story—which deals with matters only fitted for the Criminal Investigation Department or a hearing in camera—is discredible alike to author and editor. Mr. Wilde has brains, and art, and style; but if he can write for none but outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph boys, the sooner he takes to tailoring (or some other decent trade) the better for his own reputation and the public morals.
>
> —*Scots Observer*, 1890

In the Cleveland Street affair of 1889–90 several telegraph boys from the postal service were found to be moonlighting at a male brothel patronized by well-connected gentlemen. 73 The scandal, which implicated noble clients of the establishment, led to speculation that the royal family itself might be involved. Delays in prosecution by the Conservative government enabled Charles Hammond, the brothel's proprietor, and Lord Arthur Somerset, the younger son of the duke of Beaufort and an equerry to the Prince of Wales, to abscond to Europe before they were indicted. Criticism in the radical press and in Parliament led to widespread controversy about moral standards, law enforcement, and equal justice.

The Cleveland Street affair was the first public scandal to touch on male-male **[End Page 290]** sexuality after the passage of the Labouchere amendment to the Criminal Law Reform Act of 1885, which raised the age of consent for women from thirteen to sixteen and increased the penalties for brothel keepers and others who profited from prostitution. 74 Sponsored by Henry Labouchere, a radical editor and Liberal member of Parliament from Northampton, the amendment altered the legal treatment of same-sex conduct between men by stipulating that "any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labour." (Oscar Wilde was tried in 1895 for violating these provisions.)

But the legal consequences of the scandal were not quite what one might expect. G. D. Veck and Henry Newlove, who recruited and enjoyed the favors of young male prostitutes while helping Hammond run the brothel, pled guilty to violating the amendment and received light sentences. The attorney Arthur Newton, who represented Somerset's interests, was charged with obstructing justice by offering to finance the emigration of the telegraph boys before they could testify in court. Newton also pled guilty; an angry judge sentenced him to six weeks in jail. The only case to go to trial was the libel suit brought by Lord Euston, heir to the duke of Grafton, against Ernest Parke, editor of the *North London Press*. Parke had editorialized against the special treatment of prominent persons and had accused the government of complicity in their escape from justice. His headline declared that Somerset had fled to France and Euston to Peru. Although he had been named to the

police, Euston had in fact remained at home in London. At Parke's trial John Saul came forward as a witness for the defense to support the allegations of Euston's sexual misconduct. Nevertheless, Parke was convicted and sentenced to one year in prison. The most severe punishment was suffered by a journalist who had worked to expose the scandal.

This outcome is not entirely surprising, however, when the highest legal officials had argued that it might be better to allow the guilty to go free than to publicize the commission of such "unspeakable" acts. The lord chancellor, Lord Halsbury, had written to the official in charge of the case that "if . . . the social position of some of the parties will make a great sensation this will give very wide publicity and consequently will spread very extensively written matter of the most revolting and mischievous kind, the spread of which I am satisfied will produce enormous evil." 75

In an 1890 speech questioning the government's handling of the "West End Scandals," as the Cleveland Street affair came to be known, Labouchere provided a **[End Page 291]** retrospective account of his objectives in the amendment. He combined urgency in the face of social decline with the discursive indeterminacy that marked official Victorian discussions of sexual issues: "There is no doubt that of late years a certain offence—I will not give it a name—has become more rife than it ever was before." 76 Labouchere claimed that "the case was pretty well proved": "Therefore, in 1885, Parliament armed the guardians of public morality with full powers to deal with this offence. . . . they expressed their desire that it should be stamped out; and, presumably, it was intended that the law should be used equally against high and low" (1535). Labouchere expressed concern for the national reputation while recognizing the urban context of the offense: "In no other city in the world are such abominations openly carried on. Parliament has done its best to put down houses of ill-fame, but compared with this place [19 Cleveland Street] a house of ill-fame is respectable" (1541). The only details he mentioned, from police observations in 1889, referred to two soldiers—a Life Guardsman and a Royal Artilleryman—seen meeting and going off with "gentlemen." The offense alleged to be on the increase might have been the sexual exploitation of the young; or prostitution more generally, whether with girls or boys; or even the corruption of those who wore Her Majesty's uniforms. Labouchere never said. 77

The press coverage also emphasized the heinous character of unspecified sexual offenses while linking radical hostility toward the aristocracy with public suspicion of deviant desires and practices. In the *North London Press* Parke had stressed the impact on national honor: "A minister at Hackney had been condemned to penal servitude for life; with . . . no hope of a mitigation of his dreadful doom. Yet there was no trace in his case, as there is in this, of a foul and widespread plot to poison the morals of the community, and make the name of England a hissing and a reproach in Europe." The editorial concluded on an almost apocalyptic note: "If half of what we know, and are learning from day to day, comes out in a court of law, there has been accumulating under our feet a store of moral dynamite sufficient to wreck the good name of the nation." 78 The sexual peccadilloes of the clients at 19 Cleveland Street were enlarged to the moral equivalent of the Gunpowder Plot.

The drive for moral reform had played an increasingly important role in radical politics throughout the 1880s, opening rifts in the Liberal Party. 79 Labouchere's amendment was part of the Criminal Law Reform Act of 1885, passed in response to W. T. Stead's exposure of child prostution. What Frank Harris labeled "forces of religious prudishness and nonconformity" held public figures to puritanical standards in their private lives. In 1886 Stead led a campaign **[End Page 292]** against Sir Charles Dilke, an up-and-coming Liberal leader, declaring that "anyone who was unfaithful to his wife was not fit to sit in the House of Commons." 80 Before 1890 had ended, revelations of his affair with another man's wife would bring down the Irish leader Charles Stewart Parnell where forged evidence linking him to terrorist activities had failed. 81 The West End Scandals became vehicles for the continuation of the aggressive middle-class morality that sought to define the national character. As in Stead's earlier campaign, an ethos of respectability condemned both upper-class decadence and lower-class brutishness.

"Gross indecency" between men perpetuated the legacy of sodomy, "the crime not fit to be named among Christians," in its indeterminacy and inclusiveness. However, the laws against sodomy, prohibited in England since 1533, applied to acts between men and women, as well as with animals. Sodomy had been a capital offense under the "Buggery Act" of Henry VIII and remained so until 1861, when the penalty was reduced to life imprisonment. The more frequent charges were "attempted sodomy" and "indecent assault." Until the 1830s men convicted of these crimes were often subjected to the pillory, where angry crowds would hurl garbage and offal at them. Some were permanently injured or mutilated by these expressions of community morality. 82 These instances of mob violence and the fate of Somerset, exiled until his death in 1926, caution us not to

measure the impact of such laws simply in terms of court actions but to take into account the chilling effect of informal sanctions beyond their legal enforcement. 83 The ban on gross indecency lowered the penalties but apparently increased the range of prohibited activities, effectively defining all erotic conduct *between men* as criminal. 84 The Criminal Law Reform Act in principle intensified social control over female prostitutes and men who had sex with other men. 85

In the Cleveland Street affair, gross indecency was inflected differently in the lives of the telegraph boys, their aristocratic clients, and John Saul. The legal proceedings, press coverage, and political debate about the West End Scandals include few signs of Foucault's "new species" of homosexual as defined in Continental sexology. Nowhere in the newspaper accounts or official documents are there references to medicine or psychiatry. 86 Traditional moral condemnations of sodomy gained political force from their conjunction with a republican discourse that emphasized aristocratic corruption and contested the alliance between governmental power and social status. 87 Stead editorialized: "The wretched agents are run in and sent to penal servitude: the lords and gentlemen who employ them swagger at large and are even welcomed as valuable allies of the administration of the day." 88 Labouchere sounded a revolutionary note: "Our Government of the **[End Page 293]** classes is of the opinion that the revelations which would ensue were the criminals put on trial, would deal a blow to the reign of the classes, and to the social influence of the aristocracy" (123). The radical press stressed the exploitation by influential clients of working-class youths eager to improve their lot. The fact that the boys were government employees reinforced the national alarm: the police asked each whether he wore his uniform when performing indecent acts for pay, while Parliament focused on the presence of soldiers in Cleveland Street.

The age and class of these youths exempted them from the attribution of invidious sexuality. One trade union spokesman suggested that gross indecency was congenital among the upper classes but could be acquired only by sons of the workers: "Bringing up our boys as we have to do, we should not submit to a state of things which might end in their temptation, for their tempters are men of position and wealth. Working men are free from the taint, and for gold laid down our boys might be tempted to this fall" (131). The telegraph boys were cast as victims, although they were in their late teens and were pictured as respectable young men. Two of them had admitted to the police that they had "behaved indecently" with Newlove *before* he recruited them for the brothel, but no one suggested that they should have been prosecuted. 89 To mark them as deviants would have been risky in a society that segregated young men in same-sex settings like boarding schools, army barracks, navy ships, and universities. Yet as Symonds's encounters and scenes in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* reveal, men in uniform were fascinating to some other men. 90

If the telegraph boys were unlikely representatives of an emergent homosexual "species," what about their clients? Given the opprobrium visited on them, despite their insulation from legal punishment, they were stigmatized for their sexual activities. However, the stigma reflected their abuse of power and exploitation of lower-class youth as much as their choice of members of their own sex as partners. The press never precisely defined their viciousness. They had forced their proclivities on the public, and to provide a bill of particulars would only have compounded the damage they had caused. Saul told the police details of his contact with Euston that the newspapers refused to print: "He is not an actual sodomite. He likes to play with you and then 'spend' on your belly." The telegraph boys similarly revealed the reluctance of some clients to engage in anal penetration, but their specific practices do appear to have made some of them "actual sodomites." 91 However, the discourse of sodomy was linked to a conception of character, if not of identity. 92 The sodomite was a figure of excess, who posed the danger of corruption to all with whom he came into contact.

Sodomy was defined in social contexts not limited to theological proscriptions **[End Page 294]** on nonprocreative sex. 93 In the Middle Ages the church accused unorthodox sects of "unnatural" sexual practices. Later, Catholics accused Protestants, and Protestants, Catholic priests. As national feelings grew early in the modern period, deviant sexualities were attributed to foreign vices: Germans accused Florentines; the English accused the French. Acts of sodomy evidenced a spirit of revolt and a tendency toward heresy and treason. 94 But excesses of desire could lead to abuses of power. The notorious seventeenth-century sodomite Lord Castlehaven, executed for buggering both his pages and his wife, exemplified the sodomite's willingness to use anyone at his disposal to satisfy himself. 95 Although Stead's lurid exposé of child prostitution detailed the mistreatment of girls, the target of campaigners for moral purity was unbridled male lust. The existence of such figures helps explain Symonds's relentless efforts to establish an ethical defense of same-sex desire.

Nevertheless, by 1891 Symonds had become worldly enough to condone the Cleveland Street establishment, although his defense took a peculiarly democratic turn. He reported a conversation about the affair with a British

steamship officer in Venice: "[He] . . . volunteered the opinion that it was absurd to disqualify by law passions which seemed so harmless & instinctive, although he added that his own (I suspect very free) self-indulgences were in the opposite direction. The way of thinking among the proletariate, honest artizans, peasants, etc, in Italy and Switzerland—where alone I have fraternized with the people—is all in favour of free trade." 96 What Symonds saw as "free trade" looked like exploitation to the English radical press. Libertarian arguments did not appear in the public discussion. In a letter to Labouchere's journal *Truth* George Bernard Shaw drew a distinction between consensual acts among adults and the corruption of the young, but the editor refused to print it. 97 The clients at 19 Cleveland Street were represented not as defined primarily by desire for their own sex but as sodomites. If they did not embody Foucault's "modern homosexuality," that curious mix of same-sex object choice and gender inversion, the animus against them cannot be identified simply with "homophobia." 98 Initially, Somerset and Euston were paired in the press, joined as much by social status as by the charges of sexual irregularity leveled at them. Each was juxtaposed to a specific victim. Somerset was portrayed as the corrupter of the telegraph boys and was caricatured as "my Lord Gomorrah." In fact, the most telling evidence against him had come not from them but reluctantly from a youth with whom he had formed a relationship similar to those cultivated by Symonds. 99 Euston was more fortunate; his accuser was Saul.

Saul described himself in court as a "professional sodomite." He represented a social status and a personal identity quite different from those of the telegraph boys or their clients. He was the only witness sexually involved in the affair **[End Page 295]** to appear in court, testify against a noble, and be scrutinized by jury, judge, press, and public. Saul admitted to working as a male prostitute, like the delivery boys, but his contacts with men amounted to more than an opportunistic aberration in a life of working-class normalcy. Indeed, Saul seems to have fallen outside the structure of class relations in Victorian England. He exemplified the emergence of an urban underclass tied to crime, vice, and especially sex. He had come to London from Dublin, but we hear little of his home or family, just one reference to sending money to his mother. 100 He moved in a London ambience that still offers male and female prostitutes, pornography and paraphernalia, and casual cruising among men. To the police Saul recited a great many addresses, mostly between Soho and Leicester Squares, not far from the location of Symonds's meeting with the grenadier. He and Hammond "earned our livelihood as sodomites"; Hammond had presided over a succession of households including Saul, whose earnings he shared; a number of female prostitutes, one of whom he married; and at least one "spooney boy," who also procured for him. This world resembled the one depicted in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, although I doubt that its inhabitants performed so prodigiously.

Saul's prostitution enacted an ambiguous relation to class structure: he belonged to an underclass but bragged of his intimacy with nobility: "We always called him the Duke." 101 His contact with the upper crust had not materially changed his life: "I am still a professional 'Mary-ann.' I have lost my character and cannot get on otherwise. I occasionally do odd jobs for different gay people." The Criminal Law Reform Act had targeted "gay women"—prostitutes—and gross indecency, the defining activity of those who were to become "gay men." Saul's history provides a site where the two converge. He named a number of fellow Mary-Anns; at least one used a woman's name, "lively Poll." Saul described another who offered sex to set up robberies: "Clifton takes gentlemen home to his room where by arrangement two or three men are secreted under his bed, and just as they are performing, the men suddenly come out and bounce money out of them by threats." Not just legal prohibition but social circumstance, gender nonconformity, and predatory action might place professional sodomites outside the law, increasing the distance between them and their clients. When the Labouchere amendment was passed, one commentator called it "the Blackmailer's Charter."

Saul became an object of fascination and repulsion in the reports of Parke's libel trial. Although doubly contained—by the formal constraints of acting as a witness in a criminal trial and by the press's rendering of him—he displayed a theatrical flair, making the most of his day in court; a gentle and generous responsiveness; **[End Page 296]** and touches of irony, anger, and self-pity. The *Star* emphasized the effect he produced: "Dramatic indeed was the situation when this young man, asked whether he recognized anyone in court as having been to Hammond's house, pointed to Lord Euston, and in his effeminate voice, said distinctly 'Yes, that one. I took him there myself.' It seemed minutes before another question was asked. So intense was the thrill which this declaration excited." 102 The description of Saul's coup de théâtre betrays some ambivalence; not even his "effeminate voice" undermined the power of his pointing and articulation. Saul's account of life in Cleveland Street approached the genteel when he told of his visit with Euston: "Letting him in with my latchkey, I was not long in there, in the back parlor or reception room, before Hammond came and knocked, and asked if we wanted any champagne or drinks of any sort, which he was in the habit of doing." When this comment provoked laughter in the courtroom, the judge uttered an admonishment: "Such levity was brutal and

disgusting." There are multiple displacements at work here. Was the laughter "brutal and disgusting"? Was it the acts that took place between Saul and Euston? Or was it Saul's effrontery in coming forward to testify about them?

Saul refused to play the role assigned to him. He remembered Euston's return to Cleveland Street because it coincided with his lodging a grievance against Hammond: "I complained . . . of his allowing boys in good position in the Post Office to be in the house while I had to go and walk the streets for what is in my face and that is my shame." The *Star* remarked: "Saying which the witness turned away from the court, with a somewhat theatrical gesture." 103 Saul's resentment of the telegraph boys underlines the difference between men who occasionally prostituted themselves to supplement their income (like the soldiers) and the professional sodomite, who occupied a more precarious social and economic position. 104 His theatrical anger may mask an underlying sadness. I have not been able to find Saul's age. Each of the telegraph boys recited his—from fifteen to nineteen—in the police reports. Saul did not, nor is it mentioned elsewhere. But his connection with Hammond had begun in 1879, and he admitted to having been arrested in Dublin in 1875. No longer young, at least for a Mary-Ann, he supported himself by walking the streets for "what is in my face," cleaning the quarters of female prostitutes, and occasionally working at a theater. 105

The heart of Saul's testimony was his account of his first meeting with Euston. This moment was noted by both judge and press: "The brutal callousness with which this witness told his story both shocked and revolted the court." What was so "brutal"; what story so "shocked" and "revolted"? "I picked him up," he said, "just as I might have picked any other gentleman up." And how was that? **[End Page 297]**

> Where did you meet this person?—In Piccadilly, between Albany-courtyard and Sackville-street, near the Yorkshire Grey. He laughed at me, and I winked at him. He turned sharply into Sackville-street.
>
> The Judge: Who did?—The Duke, as we used to call him.
>
> Mr. Lockwood: Go on and tell what happened?—The Duke, as we called him, came after me, and asked where I was going. I said, "Home," and he said, "What sort is your place?" "Very comfortable," I replied. He said, "Is it very quiet there?" I said, "Yes, it was," and then we had a hansom cab there. We got out at Middlesex Hospital, and I took the gentleman to Cleveland-street.

Saul's testimony inverted the subject position from which the urban pickup was narrated. As the fictional Saul and Cambon do in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, they traveled by "hansom cab." However, it was not the respectable flaneur—Cambon or Symonds—but the object of his gaze who got to tell the story. Saul provided the only glimpse of Euston as more than an icon of the aristocracy. The initial encounter is irresistible: "He laughed at me, and I winked at him." Euston's exculpatory account of his one admitted visit to Cleveland Street is less charming, but no less urban. He claimed that an unknown man in Leicester Square had handed him a card advertising *poses plastiques*—a female strip show with artistic pretensions. Euston insisted that when he had realized what went on there, he had departed immediately, threatening violence to an employee who got in his way.

The judge was not charmed by Saul on the stand: "A more melancholy spectacle he could not imagine. Was Saul's story true? Lord Euston said it was as foul a perjury as a man could commit. . . . directly they could have only the oath of Lord Euston against the oath of that man. . . . they would have to ask themselves which oath they preferred—the oath of the man who, according to his own account, if he spoke the truth, was liable to be prosecuted, or the oath of the Prosecutor [Euston]." 106 It is not surprising that the judge should have sided with the heir to a duke rather than a professional sodomite. But his vehemence was excessive: he referred to Saul repeatedly as "that creature." His discussion of the oath was tendentious: the law usually regards testimony against one's own interests as enhancing one's credibility and regards self-interest as a powerful motive to lie. But then, Euston was a noble lord. The jury believed him. They found Parke "guilty of libel without justification." The judge sentenced him to one year's imprisonment, asserting that "a more atrocious libel than that of which you have been guilty has never been published by any man." 107 **[End Page 298]**

The judge urged the public prosecutor to take action against Saul. Labouchere took up the cry in *Truth*, arguing that to show him leniency would violate standards of equality. He compared Saul's situation with that of a woman serving twenty-two years for stealing provisions worth ten shillings: "To say that a poor woman was justly

punished in this cruel fashion for the pettiest of larceny, and that a wretch like Saul is to be allowed to swear away the honour and good name of a person with impunity . . . is an insult to law and justice" (58–59). When he learned that Saul would not be prosecuted, Labouchere wrote: "A more scandalous decision never was taken. A jury has declared that the 'creature' committed one of the most horrible perjuries on record—a perjury for which the longest sentence permitted by law could not be sufficient. . . . And the Public Prosecutor takes no action!" (158). 108 The radical's zeal for equal justice had reduced him to seeking the imprisonment of a Mary-Ann who had dared to accuse a noble. In general, the press welcomed the Parke verdict and celebrated the punishment of their fellow journalist. Among the few dissenters, *Reynolds'* doubted Euston's "cock-and-bull story" and concluded that "as the judge and jury have exculpated and whitewashed the future Duke, it is to be hoped his ardour for witnessing exhibitions of nude females will be somewhat cooled by recent circumstances" (160). In the *Fortnightly Review* Harris later wrote, "If Lord Euston had been Mr. Euston of Clerkenwell, his libeller would have been given a small fine." 109

The prevalent response displaced the animus originally directed at privileged malefactors onto the bearers of bad news. The rhetoric of condemnation was charged with violence. In the London periodical *People* we read, "Lord Euston has earned the gratitude of society for enabling the law to stamp upon a miscreant who, if he had his deserts, would be whipped at the cart's tail from one end of London to another." 110 Such displays of public anger had once characterized the treatment of those convicted of sexual offenses. 111 The outrage generated by the male brothel was now turned against those who accused pillars of Victorian society of patronizing such an institution. Was the whitewash of Euston the result of a hatred of sexual deviance so strong that it overrode resentment of privilege? Many preferred to believe that radical journalists had fabricated the charges to sell papers rather than that the sons of dukes paid for sex with young men from the lower classes. Something very like homophobia was at work when the fury aroused by accusations of aristocratic license was so easily redirected at the whistle-blowers, especially at the outrageous but impecunious Saul. His performance on the witness stand had mobilized deep-seated fears and hostility.

Who's afraid of John Saul, and why? He may represent something new on the social scene: an abject figure who refuses his status; a flamboyant queer. The **[End Page 299]** responses to Saul reveal how much he discomfited his respectable audience. 112 Faced with all the majesty of law and society, he insisted on remaining himself:

> And were you hunted out by the police?—No, they have never interfered. They have always been kind to me.
>
> Do you mean they have deliberately shut their eyes to your infamous practices?—They have had to shut their eyes to more than me.

Saul refused to be shamed into silence; he took refuge in campy defiance, undaunted by judge, lawyers, jury, press, and public. Does he represent the emergence of the modern homosexual, who accepts himself as defined by his sexual activities with other men but rejects the negative valence attached to same-sex desire? Or does his offensiveness result from his flaunting of sexuality? 113 Saul's personal identity and sexual activities as a professional sodomite were closely linked. He may have had more in common with the "gay ladies," full-time female prostitutes, than with the clients with whom he had sex or with part-time male prostitutes like the telegraph boys. The complex and conflicting responses to prostitution suggest that to proclaim any form of sexualized identity would have provoked an intense reaction. Even the scandal-peddling press tiptoed around the details of Saul's testimony; the public discussions of sexual offenses remained vague. Saul's offense was to insist on the subject at all.

Saul's social status and sense of himself cannot be extricated from the London demimonde through which he made his way. The cruising scenes discussed in this essay reflect the emergence of a distinctively modern and urban sexuality. This form of desire crossed lines of hetero and homo definition, masculine and feminine, although it was open to men more than to women. What I have in mind is a sense of perpetual possibility, of freedom to pursue whatever takes one's fancy—with the chance that one's interest will be reciprocated. The cruising gaze may invest any object with erotic interest and imagine its availability. Of course, this fantasy is accompanied by its own anxieties. After all, the other may not be interested; or his endowment may be an artifice that does not measure up to closer scrutiny; or there may be men hidden beneath the bed who will "bounce" you for your money. Finally, not only the object of desire but the subject himself is constructed through the cruising imagination. One may come to see oneself phantasmatically as well as the other. I feel free to

become whatever I want, transforming myself into a desirable object, by the right choice of costume or exercise regime or line of conversation. The anonymity and publicness of modern urban space enable a sphere of erotic interaction in which any man may reinvent **[End Page 300]** himself and seek others with whom to exchange desires and services. The major difficulty is that this space also obscures the political, economic, and social relations that make it possible and that continue to shape us even in our fantasies of self-making.

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1. See, among many others, Henning Bech, *When Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity*, trans. Teresa Mesquit and Tim Davies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic, 1994); John D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); and Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet, 1977).

2. Wilde’s trials signaled an upheaval in perceptions of the social control of sexuality and of the emergence of gay identities. This study attempts to look around him and reconstruct the constellation of cultural conflicts at work in the society that celebrated and vilified him.

3. I use “types” deliberately to suggest a range of human kinds not necessarily encompassed by the conceptions of “identity” that have played such an important role in recent literature. In this essay I develop more fully the ways in which such types include forms of personal desire, self-conception, intimate association, and social ascription that exist in unstable relation to each other. I am convinced by David M. Halperin that this emphasis is not so much a rejection as a refinement of Foucault. For his argument that distinguishes “sexual morphology” and “sexual subjectivity” from “sexual identity” see Halperin, “Forgetting Foucault: Acts, Identities, and the History of Sexuality,” *Representations* 63 (1998): 107–8.

4. See Judith Butler, “Critically Queer,” *GLQ* 1 (1993): 17–32; more generally, Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993). See also Morris B. Kaplan, *Sexual Justice: Democratic Citizenship and the Politics of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 1997), intro., chaps. 2 and 5.

5. The epigraph is quoted from Havelock Ellis, preface to *Sexual Inversion*, by Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds (London: Wilson and Macmillan, 1897), xiii. Symonds conducted a correspondence with Whitman over many years. A major theme in it was Symonds’s persistent questioning about the physical component of male comradeship and the poet’s equally tenacious evasiveness. When Whitman finally denied any such sexual dimension and invoked the existence of his own illegitimate children as evidence, Symonds was not convinced. Many of their letters are included in Jonathan Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the USA* (New York: Crowell, 1976). Henry James offered a different picture: “I don’t wonder that some of his [Symonds’s] friends and relations are haunted with a vague malaise. I think one ought to wish him more *humour*; it is really *the* savoury salt. But the great reformers never have it, and he is the Gladstone of the affair” (quoted in H. Montgomery Hyde, *Henry James at Home* [London, 1969], 150).

6. John Addington Symonds, *Memoirs*, ed. Phyllis Grosskurth (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 186.

7. See ibid.; and Phyllis Grosskurth, *The Woeful Victorian: A Biography of John Addington Symonds* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964). I am grateful to Paul Robinson for sharing with me the material on Symonds from *Gay Lives*, his forthcoming study of gay autobiographies.

8. Symonds, *Memoirs*, 96–98, 112–16; Grosskurth, *Woeful Victorian*, 30–41; Oliver S. Buckton, *Secret Selves: Confession and Same-Sex Desire in Victorian Autobiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 72–83. Symonds’s later reflection on this episode provides important material for a psychoanalytic reading of his moralization of desire: “The chief good which emerged from so much evil for me was I grew to be an intimate friend of my father. No veil remained between us. He understood my character; I felt his in sympathy and relied upon his wisdom. We joined hearts, not only as son and parent, but also as men of diverse temperaments and ages aspiring to the higher life in common” (*Memoirs*, 116). On p. 185 of the manuscript memoirs at the London Library, Symonds had written a different version of the paragraph, which was then crossed out, with “omit” indicated in the margin. It opens with the same sentence but goes on revealingly: “We became friends in the truest sense of the word, and he obtained an insight into my emotional and moral difficulties—too late indeed to give me any permanent direction, if that had at any time been possible—but yet of value in impressing me with a strong sense of danger.” The link between Symonds’s father’s wisdom and his own sense of danger was suppressed in the final version. I examine the manuscript and typescript of the memoirs in fuller detail in *Sodom on the Thames: Love, Lust, and Scandal in Wilde Times* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, forthcoming). Quoted by permission of Alan Bell, librarian of the London Library.

9. “My father made me see that, under the existing conditions of English manners, an ardent friendship between me (a young man, gently born, bred at Harrow, advancing to the highest academical honours at Balliol) and Willie (a Bristol chorister, the son of a Dissenting tailor), would injure not my prospects only but his reputation. . . . the ties which bound me to the class of gentlefolk brought me to look upon myself as an aberrant being, who was being tutored by my father’s highest sense of what is right in conduct. Furthermore, I recognized that in my own affection for Willie there was something similar to the passion which had ruined Vaughan” (Symonds, *Memoirs*, 116).

10. The pervasiveness of Symonds’s moral conflict about expressing his desires for other men distances him from the “Sporus-like” tradition that Sedgwick correctly identifies as having been available to “aristocratic Englishmen and their personal dependents” for centuries before the nineteenth. She tends to assimilate Symonds to that model, whereas I see him as profoundly engaged in the project of shaping a new style that comports with ethical imperatives so crucial to “gentlemen.” Sedgwick is certainly right to emphasize the way in which the attraction of Whitman must be read against the differences between class structures in Britain and the United States (*Between Men*, 201–6). Her analysis of the problematic relation between Symonds’s turn to a “new chivalry” and his understanding of the status of women is right on the mark (209–12).

11. Symonds, *Memoirs*, 129–33; Grosskurth, *Woeful Victorian*, 65–68; Buckton, *Secret Selves*, 91–96. This affair, along with a similar controversy regarding Walter Pater, is also treated in Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and*

Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 86–89.

12. The entanglement of Symonds's desire for other men with a highly moralized but powerful connection with his father is worth further exploration. His mother died when he was four, and he claimed to have little memory of her. Referring explicitly to the burst of literary activity following his father's death in 1871, Symonds wrote: "So strangely are we mortals made that God forgive me if I do not believe my father's watchful supervision would have hampered my energy. . . . I doubt whether I could have written as freely and published as spontaneously as I have done, had I been conscious of his criticism" (*Memoirs*, 235).

13. For a fascinating discussion of Symonds's response to Robert Louis Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" see Buckton, *Secret Selves*, 74–76.

14. Louis Crompton calls attention to an earlier anonymous poem, "Don Leon," that includes a defense of same-sex desire as part of a long parody of Lord Byron (*Byron and Greek Love: Homophobia in Nineteenth-Century England* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985], 343–62). He also offers a detailed analysis of Jeremy Bentham's previously unknown writings critical of the sodomy laws. The first substantial treatment of Symonds's role, and still among the best, is in Weeks, *Coming Out*, 47–56.

15. John Addington Symonds, *Letters*, ed. Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), 1:12, 35–38.

16. Throughout I refrain from using *sic* to call attention to the idiosyncratic punctuation and spelling in Symonds's letters and memoirs.

17. Passages like this one are found throughout the literature on Symonds. Wayne Koestenbaum, for instance, writes that "Symonds continually slighted what burned most deeply within him; in his own works, as in the shared *Sexual Inversion*, he leaves homosexuality a pale matter of longing, rather than a set of specific sex acts" (*Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* [New York: Routledge, 1989], 46). The anachronism and reductionism at work here serve a triumphal presentism: "To characterize Symonds as a failure would be gratuitous and uncharitable if I did not also intend to salvage his failure by treating it as representative" (44).

18. Symonds, *Letters*, 1:446, 2:43.

19. Symonds, typescript from the original manuscript of the *Memoirs*, London Library, 1:218. Grosskurth does not include this passage in her valuable edition, from which she omits about "one-fifth" of the material (Symonds, *Memoirs*, 11). Symonds recalled this moment in a letter written to his wife from France on 3 June 1867. While she was confined in England with her second pregnancy, he went abroad with his sister Charlotte on account of his health. The memory of the boy on the bridge was occasioned by their meeting with two older ladies accompanied by a young man. I discuss this episode in some detail in *Sodom on the Thames*. A severely truncated version of the letter appears in Symonds, *Letters*, 1:718–20.

20. Symonds, *Letters*, 1:722. He added, "All this has nothing to do with the ties, inviolably sacred, which bind me to my home, and make me feel my centre there in you [his wife]."

21. Symonds often adapted the language of religious conversion in describing such moments, but they did not mark a final resolution of his sexual confusions. Subsequent accounts of his personal development include a number of such turning points: his reading of Plato, his first kiss with another man, his encounter with the poetry of Whitman.

22. These efforts included historical studies of the cultures of ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance, the celebration of male comradeship in Whitman and other "Arcadian" writers, and collaboration with Ellis in promoting a "psychological" understanding of sexuality.

23. Symonds, *Memoirs*, 106.

24. Symonds, *Letters*, 1:446.

25. Similarly, Symonds's feelings exist uneasily on both sides of a border between the homosocial and homosexual that was yet to be drawn. His self-analysis exposes difficulties that may continue on both sides of

the later divide.

26. Earlier in the century in the United States, Henry David Thoreau articulated a similar perspective in his own struggle to achieve an ethic of self-making in the face of dangerous desires. He also shared Symonds's difficulty in defining the terms of mutuality in relations between men (Kaplan, *Sexual Justice*, chap. 6).

27. This insistence goes back to Pausanias's distinction between Uranian or heavenly love and its pandemic or vulgar variety in Plato's *Symposium*. A subsequent generation of men who loved boys celebrated their feelings in "Uranian" poetry. Timothy d'Arch Smith treats Symonds as one of their precursors (*Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English "Uranian" Poets from 1889 to 1930* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970]).

28. Symonds often invokes Diotima's speech as an authority for this view. For a queer reading of Plato's *Symposium* see Kaplan, *Sexual Justice*, chap. 3.

29. Although Symonds was later critical of aspects of the campaign for moral reform, he had regularly attended meetings of the nonconforming Plymouth Brethren sect to which his maternal grandmother belonged. In addition, he had a complicated friendship with Josephine Butler, the early feminist and moral reformer (*Memoirs*, 44–46, 135–36).

30. These types and others are discussed in the next two sections. Although Symonds does not directly address such figures, they appear as the social horizon of his moralizing concerns.

31. See Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*.

32. Symonds's *Studies of the Greek Poets* of 1873 was already replete with homoerotic implications for those who chose to see them. In 1883 he privately printed ten copies of *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, a study that emphasized the centrality of pederasty as an ethical institution among the ancient Greeks. For a fuller discussion of Symonds's relation to Hellenism see Kaplan, *Sexual Justice*, chap. 2.

33. John Addington Symonds, "The Dantesque and Platonic Ideals of Love," in *The Key of Blue and Other Essays* (1892; rpt. New York: Arno, 1970).

34. Symonds, *Memoirs*, 100–102. See also the response of Norman Moor, a former boyfriend, to Symonds's caution (Symonds, *Memoirs*, 295–97).

35. Brett to Charles Williamson, 17 November 1892 and 1 February 1893, vol. 1, ESHR 8/3, Esher Papers, Churchill College, Cambridge. At Eton in the 1860s Williamson, known as "Chat," had struck up a romantic friendship with Brett that lasted, in one form or another, for the rest of their lives. In the second letter Brett continued in a tone that echoes Symonds's own concerns: "I am told that his character has suffered a little of late years by the *audacity* of his *behaviour*. Have you heard anything about him?" Quoted by permission of Lord Esher. See James Lees-Milne, *The Enigmatic Edwardian: The Life of Reginald, 2d Viscount Esher* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988), 12–26. I discuss Brett and his circle in detail in *Sodom on the Thames*.

36. Symonds often distinguished himself from these friends by noting that, whereas they were academic philosophers, he was a poet at heart. His attitude toward philosophy was deeply ambivalent. In this regard he had more in common with Nietzsche, who likewise turned to the ancient Greeks for inspiration, than with his English colleagues.

37. Symonds, *Letters*, 1:828.

38. "The idea of self, well reflected on, pushed to its utmost limits, conceived in all its gloomy despotism and oppressive omnipresence, is one wh goes nigh to drive one mad. Men have made religions to escape from it; to contemplate Self, not in Itself, not cheek by jowl within the limits of their own circumference, but outside itself, far off in dim reflections and impersonalities"(ibid.). Symonds's friend and literary executor Horatio F. Brown certainly distorted his subject's life by eliminating all reference to sexuality and treating his conflicts as religious (*John Addington Symonds: A Biography Compiled from His Papers and Correspondence* [London: Smith, Elder, 1903]). However, Symonds was caught up in both and saw them as interconnected.

39. In 1865 Symonds wrote: “I have read & reread those [Shakespeare’s] Sonnets & I have never been able to find any of the gross and shameful passion in them. . . . That they express humiliation & consciousness of some sort of guilt on Shakspere’s part & overmastering affection cannot be denied. It seems also clear that he knew his friend to be unworthy of him and a man of loose life. Yet I find nothing shameful in the poems themselves, nothing that indicates a disgraceful connection between Shakspere & Mr W.H.” (*Letters*, 1:604).

40. Symonds was less seriously discomfited by the sexism of Greek culture. Although he was sympathetic to some feminist causes, he attempted seriously to moralize only male same-sex desire, largely to refute charges of effeminacy. He was also subject to the prejudices of his race and nation regarding the superiority of white European, especially British, culture. These attitudes were at odds with his own democratic aspirations, and he struggled to find an appropriate practice. For a critique of Symonds’s “orientalism” see Scott Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past: History, Culture, and Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 47–67; and Eric O. Clarke, “Inseminating the Orient, Disseminating Identity,” in *Virtuous Vice: Homoeroticism in the Public Sphere* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, forthcoming). Ruth Vanita adds a feminist note: “He seeks [i.e., looks] to male homoeroticism for the manly imperialist ideal” (*Sappho and the Virgin Mary: Same-Sex Love and the English Literary Imagination* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1996], 71).

41. Symonds, *Memoirs*, 253.

42. It is puzzling that while Grosskurth includes some short extracts from this material, she omits Catherine’s account of their courtship and first year of marriage, which Symonds included in full. See the manuscript of the *Memoirs*, London Library.

43. Symonds, *Memoirs*, 260–61. Symonds does not quote Catherine’s words on this matter as he so frequently does elsewhere in his memoirs.

44. Symonds’s experiences oddly anticipate those of today’s “global gay” and raise questions concerning the relation between liberated cosmopolitanism and sex tourism.

45. Symonds, *Memoirs*, 266.

46. For a systematic examination of the role of fantasy in constructing sexual subjects and the objects of their desire see Kaplan, *Sexual Justice*, chap. 4.

47. See, generally, Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap’s Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700–1830* (London: GMP, 1992). Although Norton’s assimilation of these phenomena to a perennial “gay subculture” is not persuasive and his writing is often over the top, he has gathered a great deal of useful material. For theoretically sophisticated reflections on these phenomena see Randolph Trumbach, “The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Europe, 1660–1750,” in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989), 129–40.

48. Quoted in H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Other Love: An Historical and Contemporary Survey of Homosexuality in Britain* (London: Heinemann, 1970), 120.

49. See William Roughead, *Bad Companions* (Edinburgh: Green and Sons, 1930); Jeffrey Weeks, *Against Nature: Essays on History, Sexuality, and Identity* (London: Rivers Oram Press; Concord, Mass.: Paul, 1991), 49–51; Neil Bartlett, *Who Was That Man? A Present for Mr. Oscar Wilde* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 1988), 129–43; and William A. Cohen, *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press; 1996), 73–129. Bartlett, a novelist, actor, and director, has written a personal, learned, and engaging book that brings the gay London of the 1980s into dialogue with the earlier period. Cohen’s brilliant chapter on Boulton and Park is simply the best analysis of the pair and their trial in print.

50. Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 69–89. At the trial of Boulton and Park, however, the lord chief justice made clear his disapproval of the police surgeon’s initiative.

51. The Boulton and Park case was the first in a series of conjunctions of male same-sex desire and prostitution during the nineteenth century that included the Labouchere amendment to the Criminal Law Reform Act of 1885

and the Cleveland Street affair. See Jeffrey Weeks, “Inverts, Perverts, and Mary-Annes: Male Prostitution and the Regulations of Homosexuality in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, *Hidden from History*, 195–211. This link could be found up through the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report in 1957. Weeks’s remarkably suggestive essay is in large part the inspiration for my own research.

52. See Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*; Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 69–86; and Edward J. Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1977).

53. See Amanda Anderson, *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995).

54. The handwritten verbatim trial transcript is available as DPP 4/6, pt. 1, Public Records Office, London. I treat the trial of Boulton and Park at greater length in *Sodom on the Thames*.

55. Clinton died before the case went to trial, under circumstances that led to suspicions of suicide.

56. “The verdict seems unbelievable. The evidence of Fanny and Stella’s visibility was converted into proof that they didn’t exist” (Bartlett, *Who Was That Man?* 142).

57. Quoted in Cohen, *Sex Scandal*, 112–13.

58. Algernon Swinburne, *Letters*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang, 6 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1959–62), 3:143–44. After his arrest Solomon was dropped by the bohemian circle of pre-Raphaelite painters and poets with which he had been associated, even though the absence of publicity about his subsequent conviction resulted in his release from jail under supervision six weeks later. Swinburne’s comments were especially pusillanimous. I treat this episode in more detail in *Sodom on the Thames*.

59. See Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 109–42. Fraser’s conception of “subaltern publics” captures the social reality better than any notion of homogeneous popular opinion.

60. Quoted in Colin Simpson, Lewis Chester, and David Leitch, *The Cleveland Street Affair* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), 59.

61. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain, with Short Essays on Sodomy and Tribadism*, 2 vols. (London, 1881). The contemporary version of the novel (New York: Masquerade, 1992) is based on this text but revises it in major respects. The text is an important document in the history of sexuality; I develop a full reading of it in *Sodom on the Thames*. Apart from Cohen’s reading of John Saul’s spying on Boulton and Lord Arthur Clinton (*Sex Scandal*, 123–29), it has not received much scholarly attention. In his landmark study *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Basic, 1966), for example, Steven Marcus misses it completely and consequently argues that homosexual conduct between men was largely absent from that material and displaced onto flagellation scenes.

62. I cannot agree with the assessment of H. Montgomery Hyde, the assiduous but rather old-fashioned and not completely reliable historian of English homosexuality (as he regards it): “Although some of the details of the incidents described in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains* [*sic*] may be exaggerated, the work is based upon fact and no doubt gives a faithful enough picture of a seamy side of contemporary London life” (*Other Love*, 123). Hyde seems to me even farther off the mark when he writes, regarding the historical Saul, who testified at Ernest Parke’s libel trial in the Cleveland Street affair: “He had given a detailed account of his homosexual activities to the author of *The Sins*” (*Their Good Names: Twelve Cases of Libel and Slander, with Some Introductory Reflections on the Law* [London: Hamilton, 1970], 107).

63. A French bookseller named Charles Hirsch claimed to have sold Wilde “certain licentious works of a special genre which he [Hirsch] euphemistically called ‘socratic.’ Most of these were in French, but at least one, he

recalled, was in English. This was *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*" (H. Montgomery Hyde, *A History of Pornography* [London: Heinemann, 1964], 149–50).

64. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, 2:100–107, 107–17, 118–22. All quotations are from the 1881 edition, a copy of which I examined at the British Library and use here with permission. Parenthetically I provide page references to comparable passages when they occur in Masquerade Books' 1992 Badboy version, which is more easily accessible but not reliable.

65. The discourses on prostitution tended to divide women into those who were totally asexual and in need of protection, "angels in the house," and loose or fallen women who carried the contagion of sexual excess as well as venereal disease.

66. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (New York: Harpers, 1975), 10.

67. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, 1:9 (8).

68. The historical Saul testified at Parke's libel trial that he had gone with Lord Euston in a cab to 19 Cleveland Street after meeting him in Piccadilly.

69. Interestingly, the fictional account supports claims that the hotel's management made in a letter published in the *Times* during the trial: "No doubt the proprietor was quite innocent of any idea of what our fun really was; but there were two or three dressing rooms into which the company could retire at pleasure."

70. Symonds, *Letters*, 3:813.

71. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, 1:86–87 (82).

72. A number of the locales and social milieus in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* are familiar from the *Yokel's Preceptor*, Symonds's *Memoirs*, and the trial of Boulton and Park.

73. The major source for this discussion is the public prosecutor's file DPP 1/95/1–7, Public Records Office, London. This file includes statements by witnesses to the police, extensive memorandums exchanged among various officials, records of court proceedings, and clippings from contemporary newspapers. This material was not open for examination until 1976, when two books were published: Simpson, Chester, and Leitch, *Cleveland Street Affair*; and H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Cleveland Street Scandal* (London: Allen, 1976). Where possible I identify the location of quotations in already published material. Writing in the era of Watergate, Simpson and his colleagues concentrate on the cover-up, while Hyde is interested more broadly in the social regulation of "homosexuality." For a sensationalistic rehearsal of allegations that Queen Victoria's grandson was involved in the affair, as well as in the crimes attributed to Jack the Ripper, see Theo Aronson, *Prince Eddy and the Homosexual Underworld* (London: Murray, 1994).

74. These reforms were in part a response to the furor generated by W. T. Stead's revelations of the traffic in female child prostitutes in the series "The Maiden Tribute to Babylon" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. See the fascinating analysis in Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 81–134.

75. Quoted in Simpson, Chester, and Leitch, *Cleveland Street Affair*, 105.

76. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 3d ser., 341 (1890): 1534.

77. Labouchere's characterization of the legal context is problematic. He argued that "this offence" had previously been hard to prove and that similar offenses had not been prohibited, which implies that he had made an effort to expand the coverage of the sodomy laws beyond anal intercourse. But he also claimed that the model for his amendment was the French statute that had *decriminalized* sodomy under the Napoleonic Code in 1815. The only same-sex conduct that remained subject to criminal penalty in France when Labouchere spoke in 1890 involved force, the abuse of minors, or public exhibitionism. Furthermore, Labouchere asserted that he had proposed harsher penalties, which Parliament had reduced, whereas the opposite was true.

78. Quoted in Hyde, *Cleveland Street Scandal*, 112.

79. See Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance*.

80. Frank Harris, *My Life and Loves* (New York: Weidenfeld, 1991), 640.

81. See H. Montgomery Hyde, *A Tangled Web: Sex Scandals in British Politics and Society* (London: Futura, 1986), 111–45.

82. See Rictor Norton, *Mother Clap's Molly House: The Gay Subculture in England, 1700–1830* (London: GMP, 1992), 130–33, 191–94; and Crompton, *Greek Love*, 21–22, 158–71.

83. See Crompton, *Greek Love*, 12–62.

84. The legal history of the Labouchere amendment forces one to conclude that a much-repeated episode is apocryphal: the law originally proscribed gross indecency between women as well, but this provision was withdrawn when Queen Victoria herself insisted that such a thing was impossible.

85. Recent empirical work has shown that police and judicial enforcement of the laws concerning same-sex conduct did not substantially alter after the passage of the Labouchere amendment in 1885 (see Harry Cocks, "Abominable Crimes: Sodomy Trials in English Law and Culture, 1830–1889" [Ph.D. diss., University of Manchester, 1998]). Nevertheless, it is frequently urged that the ban on gross indecency between men marked a sea change in the social response to male homoeroticism. Some claim that the amendment amounted to a prohibition on homosexuality as such: Koestenbaum, among many others, emphasizes "the possibilities that opened up with the Labouchere Amendment: the 'invention' of a world divided into two sexual preferences made possible a vocal, emancipatory gay culture" (*Double Talk*, 50). This claim gives far too much weight to the legislative arena while ignoring enforcement practices. At the same time, the publicity surrounding the Cleveland Street affair and, even more so, Wilde's conviction for gross indecency engendered major cultural conflict and set in motion unpredictable social effects. Already in *Sexual Inversion* Ellis had observed that Wilde's trials, paradoxically, had encouraged individuals to recognize themselves as "sexual inverts."

86. In the trial of Boulton and Park, by contrast, medical evidence had figured importantly, if controversially. Contemporary efforts to elucidate the Cleveland Street affair in terms of pathology appear only in private correspondence that did not see the light of day until 1976. In a letter to the prime minister, Lord Salisbury, that confirms public suspicions of a cover-up, Sir Dighton Probyn, a high official in the Prince of Wales's household, expressed concern about the impact of prosecution on Somerset's family and then wrote, "For the man, in his defense, I can only trust that he is *mad*." Similarly, after hearing from Probyn the facts of the case against his equerry, the Prince of Wales wrote the prime minister and referred to "the 'unfortunate Lunatic' (I can call him nothing else)" (Hyde, *Cleveland Street Scandal*, 96). However, these judgments are not specific and make no reference to medical opinion.

87. For a discussion of the linkages between sexual conduct and ethical discourse in the nineteenth century and earlier see Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, 5–12; and Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde, and the Queer Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 25–42.

88. Quoted in Simpson, Chester, and Leitch, *Cleveland Street Affair*, 68.

89. In fact, George Wright admitted having participated in acts that amounted to Newlove's attempt to sodomize him. Although initially he denied that he had tried to do such a thing to Newlove in return, toward the end of his statement, in response to Newlove's assertion, he confessed that he had.

90. D'Arch Smith, arguing that telegraph boys were particularly favored by men who sought sex with youth, quotes a turn-of-the-century writer who described them as "the aristocracy of the messenger world" (*Love in Earnest*, 29).

91. An aversion to anal penetration, whatever one's role, appears in Symonds's *Memoirs* as well.

92. During the nineteenth century "character" played an increasingly important role in moral and political discourse, which gave an evangelical Christian cast to notions of moral virtue as old as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. See Stefan Collini, "The Idea of Character in Victorian Political Thought," *Transactions of the Royal*

Historical Society 35 (1985): 29–55. Cocks shows that at trials for sexual offenses, character was conflated with reputation and linked to norms of masculinity and middle-class morality (“Abominable Crimes,” 132–86).

93. See Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men’s, 1982); and Trumbach, “Birth of the Queen.”

94. Indeed, Foucault himself, in his later work explicating the sexual ethos of ancient Greece and Rome, portrays a conceptual frame similar to the one at work in Europe during and after the Renaissance. As David M. Halperin points out, it was a common trope in ancient Greek moralizing to warn responsible fathers to protect both their sons and their daughters from men known to pursue either (“Is There a History of Sexuality?” in Abelove, Barale, and Halperin, *Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, 416–31).

95. The sodomite is virtually indistinguishable from the rake, a close relative, and the rake is godfather at least to the nineteenth-century dandy. See Trumbach, “Birth of the Queen.”

96. Symonds, *Letters*, 3:554.

97. See Morris B. Kaplan, “Did My Lord Gomorrah Smile? Social Class, Prostitution, and Sexuality in the Cleveland Street Affair,” in *Disorder in the Court: Trials and Sexual Conflict at the Turn of the Century*, ed. Nancy Erber and George Robb (New York: New York University Press, forthcoming).

98. Richard Dellamora discusses the Cleveland Street affair in relation to the use of homophobia to enforce “compulsory heterosexuality.” Although he recognizes the pervasiveness of social class as an issue, he seems anachronistically to dismiss its importance: “The main point about the legal charges growing out of the scandal is not that aristocrats should be subject to the same penalties as young men involved in the sex trade, but rather that neither group should have been liable to prosecution” (*Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990], 12). Dellamora’s comments about the criminalization of the sex trade are suggestive, but he puts too much weight on gross indecency and overlooks the more general interdictions on prostitution. His analysis is further skewed by his focusing on the telegraph boys, none of whom was prosecuted, and neglecting the distinctive figure of John Saul (see esp. 193–212). Dellamora’s discussion of sex scandals is part of a larger argument that the flourishing of discourses of same-sex desire during and after the 1860s was checked by increasingly powerful expressions of homophobia toward the end of the century, culminating in the prosecution of Wilde. His account of the former period is illuminating, but the latter period requires a more nuanced analysis.

99. For a detailed discussion of Somerset see Kaplan, “Did My Lord Gomorrah Smile?”

100. Interestingly, in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* Saul comes from the English countryside. It is tempting to believe that the treatment of the historical Saul was affected by his Irish origins. The only suggestion of it that I have found is one reference to his speaking with a “foreign” accent. Most of the newspapers described his speech as “effeminate.”

101. One name mentioned by Saul surfaces nowhere else in the police reports, court proceedings, or popular press: that of George Cavendish Bentinck, “who frequently visited the home and had to do with boys.” D’Arch Smith describes Bentinck as an “ultra-Tory” member of Parliament who had been a “hard-line opponent” of the Criminal Law Reform Act (*Love in Earnest*, 169).

102. Simpson, Chester, and Leitch, *Cleveland Street Affair*, 152.

104. Walkowitz stresses in *Prostitution and Victorian Society* that one of the effects of the Contagious Diseases Acts was to transform prostitution from an occasional activity of hard-pressed working-class women into a full-time profession and a stigmatized social status.

105. Saul referred to a recent stint at the Drury Lane Theatre in connection with a performance of *The Royal Oak* but did not say what his work had been.

106. *Standard*, 17 January 1890.

107. Quoted in Hyde, *Cleveland Street Scandal*, 156.

108. Hyde writes that these passages came from the same editorial (*Cleveland Street Scandal*, 158). In fact, the first appeared in *Truth* on 23 January 1890, 156–57; the second, on 30 January 1890, 204.

109. Harris had a theory about how the system worked: “The judges almost all come from the upper middle class and invariably, in my experience, toady to aristocratic sentiment. Every Judge’s wife wants to be a Lady (with a capital, please, printer!), and her husband as a rule gets ennobled the quicker the more he contrives to please his superiors in the hierarchy” (*My Life and Loves*, 337).

110. Quoted in Simpson, Chester, and Leitch, *Cleveland Street Affair*, 164.

111. The violent approval of Parke’s imprisonment crossed class and party lines. The *Labour Elector*, published by the dockers’ union, whose strike in the previous year Parke had supported, treated Euston as a victim of injustice with a right to defend his injured honor: if he “had gone to the office and there and then twisted the little wretch’s neck nobody would have blamed him. We are not, as a rule, in favour of Lynch Law, but there are undoubtedly cases in which it is permissible, and this was one. Penal servitude for life or for a lengthened period of years might have met the justice of the case; but twelve months’ imprisonment, without hard labour, is little better than mockery” (quoted in Simpson, Chester, and Leitch, *Cleveland Street Affair*, 164–65).

112. Michael S. Foldy situates the hostility to Wilde in relation to the challenges he posed to the regime of middle-class respectability asserted through moral purity campaigns and radical politics more generally (*The Trials of Oscar Wilde: Deviance, Morality, and Late Victorian Society* [New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997]). Foldy is especially good at tracing the scandal to divisions in the Liberal Party. But I find his identification of Wilde with the self-consciously rebellious stance of a Sadean sodomite unpersuasive. Wilde’s work and career were far too deeply entangled in the society whose norms he subverted. Saul strikes me as a more plausible candidate to pose such a threat, although without any such evident intentions. Wilde’s famous speech in defense of “the love that dare not speak its name,” which resulted in a hung jury at his first criminal trial, reiterated ethical arguments familiar from Symonds. Part of the difficulty was the juxtaposition of Wilde’s high rhetoric with the stories of the male prostitutes and blackmailers who emerged from the sexual underworld to testify against him. It is an interesting question why these men were believed when Saul was vilified. The difference turns in part on the social distance between Euston, heir to a duke, and Wilde, middle-class aesthete, playwright, and Irishman. The complex configuration of class, radical politics, moral conflict, and consumer culture in the Wilde affair is well analyzed in Regenia A. Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1986).

113. I owe this point to Tracy Strong.

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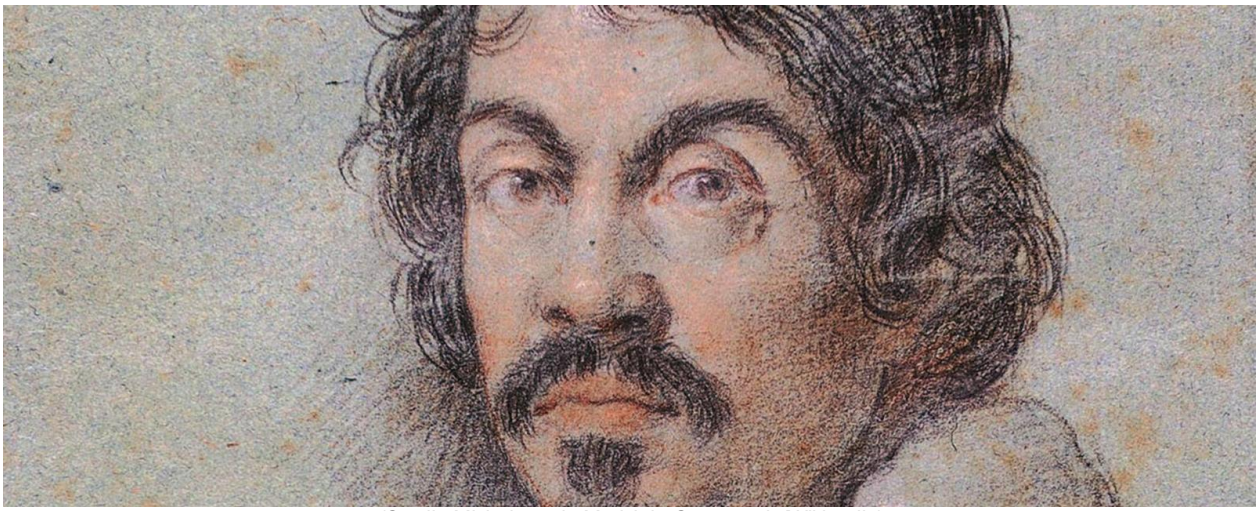
Why Caravaggio was as shocking as his paintings

By Alastair Sooke 11 October 2016

bbc.com

BBC Why Caravaggio was as shocking as his paintings

BBC



(Credit: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio/Wikipedia)

Caravaggio's revolutionary style influenced everyone from modern photographers to Scorsese – but his life was just as provocative as his paintings, writes Alastair Sooke.

Is any artist's biography more compelling than the life of the Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610)? He has a reputation, of course, as the rebellious, hot-tempered punk of art history, pitching up in Rome in the final decade of the 16th Century, and electrifying the art world as much for his quarrelsome antics as his unconventional pictures.

According to one early biographer, the Flemish writer Karel van Mander, Caravaggio used to work intensively for a fortnight and then "swagger about for a month or two with a sword at his side … from one tennis-court to the next, ever ready to engage in a fight or an argument, with the result that it is most difficult to get along with him".

> In the early years of the 17th Century, he was brought to trial on at least 11 occasions

Not half: in the early years of the 17th Century, he was brought to trial on at least 11 occasions. The charges included swearing at a constable, penning satirical verses about a rival painter, and chucking a plate of artichokes in a waiter's face.

And then, in 1606, he was forced to flee Rome, after killing a man during a brawl sparked by a dispute over a game of tennis. He spent the rest of his life on the run, before he collapsed and died, in the summer of 1610, while travelling back to Rome to seek a pardon from the pope.



The Calling of St Matthew is one of two large canvasses that turned Caravaggio into a star overnight (Credit: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio/Wikipedia)

As for his paintings, well, they were just as provocative as the man who created them. According to Letizia Treves, the curator of Beyond Caravaggio, a new exhibition at the National Gallery in London exploring the dramatic influence of the Italian painter upon 17th-Century art, Caravaggio revolutionised art history in several ways.

The Calling of St Matthew

First, he used models in an unorthodox and novel manner – pulling into his studio people from the streets whom he then painted directly from life. “Artists had always drawn from life,” Treves explains, “but no one posed their models and painted directly from life onto their final canvas. Caravaggio didn’t bother with the academic study of drawing. He skipped that stage because he believed in the importance of looking at nature.” This resulted in paintings remarkable for their striking, in-your-face realism, which captured even the humblest details: if the model had dirty fingernails, for instance, then Caravaggio would paint them.



Boy Lizard

A rose and sprig of jasmine inside a glass vase beside some cherries are placed prominently in the foreground in Boy Bitten by a Lizard (Credit: The National Gallery, London)

A corollary of this was that Caravaggio lavished as much attention on inanimate objects as he did on people: look, for instance, at the magnificent still life – a rose and sprig of jasmine inside a glass vase, beside some cherries – placed prominently in the foreground Boy Bitten by a Lizard from the National Gallery’s own collection. “He really elevated still life, which was the lowest genre,” Treves continues. “He is said to have remarked that painting still life requires as much artistry as painting figures. That was really revolutionary.”

Light and shade

Caravaggio’s second big innovation, meanwhile, was his use of light. “That’s what he’s most famous for,” says Treves. “It’s what the biographers talk about – that he wouldn’t allow anyone to pose in daylight, that he had light shine from above. He used light to capture form, create space, and add drama to otherwise everyday scenes.”

The Supper at Emmaus, also in the National Gallery, is a case in point. At supper one evening shortly after the crucifixion, two of Jesus’s disciples suddenly realise that their dinner companion is in fact the resurrected Christ. “It’s a moment of revelation, and the light underpins that narrative,” Treves says. “So Caravaggio uses light in an emblematic way, not just as theatre. It’s very sophisticated.”



The Supper at Emmaus

The Supper at Emmaus shows how Caravaggio used light to capture form and add drama (Credit: The National Gallery, London)

This combination of realism and dramatic lighting resulted in exceptionally powerful storytelling. “Caravaggio made these Biblical stories so vivid,” Treves says. “He brought them into his own time – and he involves you, so that you don’t just passively watch. Even today, you don’t need to know the story of The Supper at Emmaus in order to feel involved in the drama.”

John Ruskin castigated Caravaggio for his ‘vulgarity’, ‘dullness’, and ‘impiety’

Beyond Caravaggio explores the impact of the Italian’s art upon his contemporaries and followers. ‘Caravaggio mania’ raged across Europe in the early decades of the 17th Century, as wealthy patrons competed to buy his

pictures, and artists emulated, or simply ripped off, his distinctive style. The National Gallery's exhibition offers a chance to consider the varying talents of these artists, including the Dutchmen Dirck van Baburen and Gerrit van Honthorst, as well as the French painter Valentin de Boulogne, who are often grouped together as 'Caravaggists'.

The curious thing is that by the middle of the 17th Century, the vogue for painting in the manner of Caravaggio had passed. "There was a real shift in taste back to classicism," explains Treves. "And the naturalistic way of painting that Caravaggio had introduced was seen as the antithesis of that noble tradition of painting going back to Raphael."

It would take almost three centuries before Caravaggio's reputation rose again. To give you a sense of how low his stock tumbled, consider The Supper at Emmaus: the only reason that it ended up in the National Gallery in 1839 was because its owner had failed to sell the painting at auction eight years earlier. The important 19th-Century British art critic John Ruskin castigated Caravaggio for his "vulgarity", "dullness", and "impiety", and lamented the fact that the Italian had supposedly overlooked beauty in favour of "horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin". Ouch.

'Hookers and hustlers'

Things changed, though, during the 20th Century, when Caravaggio came back into fashion – largely as a result of a ground-breaking monographic exhibition staged by the art historian Roberto Longhi in Milan in 1951. Following his return to prominence, Caravaggio once more began to inspire artists in various fields.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, his use of light had a big influence upon film-makers and photographers. The photographer David LaChapelle, for instance, has spoken about the "really big impact" that Derek Jarman's film Caravaggio (1986) had upon him. Inspired to find out more about him, LaChapelle discovered that Caravaggio had painted "the courtesans and the street people, the hookers and the hustlers". This in turn informed his own photographic series Jesus Is My Homeboy, which featured people from the street dressed in modern clothing.



Caravaggio film

Derek Jarman's film Caravaggio (1986) featured Dexter Fletcher as the young artist – David LaChapelle has sited it as an influence (Credit: Cinevista)

Even the film director Martin Scorsese admires Caravaggio. Quoted in Andrew Graham-Dixon's Caravaggio: A Life Sacred and Profane, Scorsese says: "I was instantly taken by the power of [Caravaggio's] pictures … You come upon the scene midway and you're immersed in it … It was like modern staging in film: it was so powerful and direct. He would have been a great filmmaker, there's no doubt about it."

According to Scorsese, the bar sequences in Mean Streets (1973) were a direct homage to Caravaggio: "It's basically people sitting in bars, people at tables, people getting up. The Calling of St Matthew [one of two large canvases that Caravaggio painted for the Contarelli Chapel in the church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome, which turned him into a star almost overnight], but in New York! Making films with street people was what it was really about, like he made paintings with them."

> He would have been a great filmmaker, there's no doubt about it – Martin Scorcese

Visual artists, too, are once again making work directly inspired by Caravaggio. Two years ago, the British artist Mat Collishaw staged Black Mirror, an exhibition at the Galleria Borghese in Rome that responded to its exquisite collection. Three of the works consisted of highly ornate black picture frames surrounding dark mirrors reflecting back the surrounding galleries. Within each mirror it was possible to make out a flickering simulacrum of a famous painting by Caravaggio in the Galleria Borghese.



Mean Streets

According to Scorsese, the bar scenes in Mean Streets are a direct homage to Caravaggio (Credit: Alamy)

“I wanted to go back to the moment when Caravaggio was immortalising the humble models in front of him – turning them from living, breathing human beings into icons of Western painting,” Collishaw explains. “Appearing from behind the mirror is this shimmering image of a man or a woman holding a slightly jittery pose, a chimerical spirit-presence coming back to haunt you through the mirror.”

This spectral effect imbued Collishaw’s black mirrors with a kind of sinister sorcery. They looked like they should be hanging in a necromancer’s hideaway rather than a gallery. According to Collishaw, the dark backgrounds of Caravaggio’s paintings allowed him to achieve the subtle effects he had in mind. Yet Collishaw also says that Caravaggio has inspired him throughout his life. He passionately believes that Caravaggio still matters in the 21st Century.

“He’s one of those artists you don’t need to read about and study because, as a painter, he’s so visceral: he just hits you right there,” he explains. “When Caravaggio was painting, the common people weren’t going to church looking for lessons in aesthetics and art history. They just wanted a relationship with God. And Caravaggio gave it to them in a language they could understand. He’s so brutally real. He doesn’t embellish or decorate things, but gives you life as it is – with dirty feet right in your face.”

Today, Collishaw says, Caravaggio’s tempestuous character is almost as important – as the template for the volatile, anti-bourgeois artist – as his art. “It’s not just what he painted but who he was,” he explains. “He was a man of the night. He used to wander around in the shadows with his cutlass hanging from him, drinking and fighting alongside prostitutes and petty criminals. I think of Francis Bacon stalking Soho at night in the ‘50s.” Collishaw pauses. “Who isn’t influenced by Caravaggio? The immediacy of his paintings is something that I and a lot of other artists have responded to. They just seem so contemporary.”

Alastair Sooke is Art Critic and Columnist for The Daily Telegraph

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Why monsters, demons and witches are on the ballot this year

2016-10-30 latimes.com

Historians are vague about why in 1845 the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November was designated election day. The most specific guess is that in an agrarian society it couldn't have been on Sunday Sabbath or Wednesday market day — which hardly resolves the question. Every year this seemingly arbitrary congressional decision puts election day close to Halloween, and this year that association has never been more appropriate. Throughout the interminable campaign, images of demons, witches and monsters have been a significant part of rhetoric, primarily from the conspiracy theory-oriented right and left, but also seeping into otherwise rational commentary.

A good chunk of this monster talk began some years ago with the "birther" attack on President Obama's origins. In contemporary terms the charge was that he was not born in the United States but came from elsewhere — Kenya perhaps — and was part Muslim. But in mythological terms he was therefore the changeling or the demon child, a characterization that carried with it more than a touch of racial prejudice. The invocation of myth strengthened a politics of hostility and fear. Even more recently, a right-wing conspiracy theorist is claiming that Obama and Hillary Clinton stink of sulphur, like demons from hell. The president, the theorist says, is particularly attractive to flies. In case you miss the allusion, it associates him with the Philistine god Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies.

When emotional appeals drown out substantial issues in politics, the recourse to monsters may seem inevitable. During the primaries, David Horsey, the Times editorial cartoonist, wittily cast Donald Trump as the Frankenstein monster and Ted Cruz as Dracula. Since Cruz had already been dubbed the Prince of Darkness by one of his Senate colleagues, the association came easily. In this incarnation, instead of being chased by villagers with torches and pitchforks, the Frankenstein monster now seems to be leading them. To complete this chamber of horrors, Clinton has long been portrayed as a witch, and a recent op ed headline in the Times warned that, if Trump loses the election, "Trumpism may have a zombie life."

When denouncing an opponent, it's always persuasive to fit him or her into a pre-existing story, preferably a negative one.

The monster strategy, with its shorthand depictions of dread and terror, has a long history. When denouncing an opponent, it's always persuasive to fit him or her into a pre-existing story, preferably a negative one.

The kind that works best derives from a source that is deeply etched in the culture, like those emotionally gripping images that come from folklore, fairy tales and religion. The capitalist as a bloodsucking vampire, for example, was as useful a political metaphor for Karl Marx in the 19th century as it had been for Voltaire a hundred years before. In Paris and London, Voltaire wrote in 1764, "stock jobbers, brokers and men of business … sucked the blood of people in broad daylight." Why go into complicated political or economic arguments when you can more efficiently describe your enemy as a monster?

In contrast with the effort to evoke hostility and demonize your enemy, the film director Guillermo del Toro has said that horror lets us sympathize with the Other, and the monstrous in his films, such as "Pan's Labyrinth," can be simultaneously terrifying, comforting and a way into an alternate reality. Certainly the poignant Frankenstein monster, pleading to be understood and loved, is an example of the sympathetic monster.

But the monster stories being invoked in the 2016 campaign are usually much more negative, unless the monster happens to be on your side — like the Golem, the crude, lurching (but sometimes protective) monster from Jewish folklore, to which the looming Trump in the second debate bore an uncanny resemblance. Trump's "monstrous" behavior gets excoriated by his critics and celebrated (or at least explained away) by his followers. In a similar way, since the "nasty woman" remark in the third debate, Clinton's supporters have embraced her witchy image and remade it as something positive — an austere Katniss Everdeen in a pantsuit, with a touch of Glinda, the Good Witch of the South.

The invocation of monsters is especially prevalent during periods of fearful change and upheaval. The story of the Golem entered literature from folklore in the early 19th century, along with the beginnings of Jewish political emancipation; Golem films of the early 20th century appeared during a time of widespread antisemitism. Frankenstein, by the same token, reflects an anxiety about science, technology and the modern world that is still with us.

The legendary monsters of the past are shadows in the dark that make a good fit for our unhappy era. To those feeling adrift in a world where there are few if any absolutes, monster images appeal by their seeming simplicity, their guise of inevitability. They offer illusory solace for those who want to feel in the know, for the gullible and naïve, for the cynics who see the dark side of everything, and even for the merely worried.

Amid uncertainty about the present and apprehension for the future, monsters will continue to be ressurrected. But the truly scary part is that we might continue to be unaware of the deep-seated terrors they represent, let alone how easily those fears can influence the way we vote. .

Leo Braudy is a professor of English and American literature at USC. His newest book, "Haunted: On Ghosts, Witches, Vampires, Zombies, and Other Monsters of the Natural and Supernatural Worlds," was published last week.

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Why people are scared of black cats – and why they're locked inside at Halloween

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mirror.co.uk



Getty Images

Black cats could be in danger at Halloween

You're probably aware that some people are afraid of black cats.

You might even be cautious of them yourself? Many think that the animals are a sign of bad luck.

But why? What fuels the superstition? Surely disliking an animal simply because of its fur colour is entirely irrational.

According to *Today I Found Out* , the origins date back to the Middle Ages, long after 3,000 BC when, particularly in countries such as Egypt, cats were worshipped.

Witches

As society changed and centuries passed, black cats became feared and maligned as 'witches' were.



Getty

Hysteria spread in these superstitious times. People thought witches were practising black magic and darkness (the new Christian society battling against past Pagan beliefs) – and it just so happened that it was then that stray cats become more apparent.

Guess who looked after them? Yes – poor, lonely old ladies who felt sorry for the alley cats and gave them morsels to eat. The original 'cat ladies', perhaps.

And so these cat companions – some of which were black – were deemed guilty by association. Folklore latched on and stories were told.

Modern times

These superstitions have continued into modern times. However absurd you might think it.



RSPCA

It means that often, black cats are left without a home.

"The RSPCA has more than 1,300 cats in its centres looking for their fur-ever homes - more than any other animal and 15 per cent more than at the same time last year," the animal welfare charity says.

"RSPCA centres find they have black and black and white cats waiting that little bit longer to be re-homed compared with some cats with other coat colours."

According to the organisation, figures show that there are more black cats in its care than any other colour. As of October 1, there were more than 1,000 waiting for a snuggly family to cuddle up to.

RSPCA cat behaviour and welfare expert Alice Potter said: “We would urge people to look beyond an animal's appearance. Their coat colour makes no difference to how much love they have to give.

“Black cats can make lovely family pets. There are many in our care ready for their new home and we would love to hear from anyone who is willing to give them a new life.”

It gets worse for black cats



RSPCA

At Halloween, the myths and legends and strange happenings take centre stage. People dress up as ghouls and ghosts – and black cats, sometimes.

While most celebrations are fun and lighthearted, there are some who take Halloween more seriously than others. And black cats could be in danger.

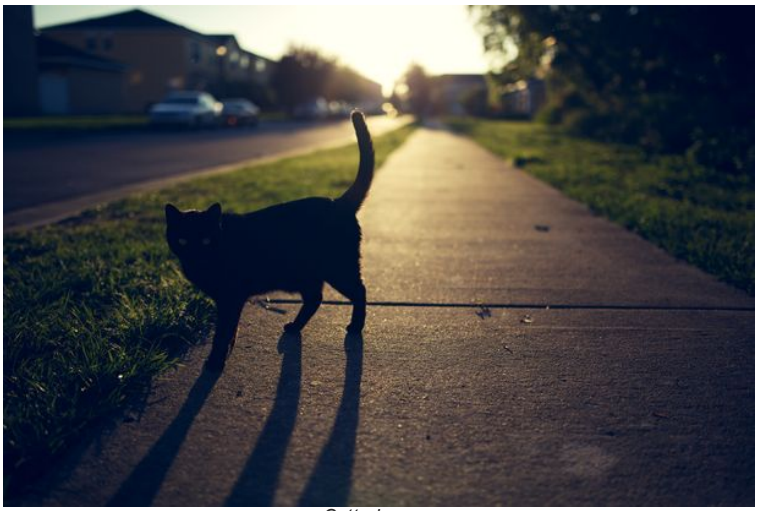
Some people have been known to torture black cats in a ritualistic display of gruesome behaviour. While incidents are very rare, the likes of the RSPCA calls on owners to keep their pets indoors on Halloween night (and the weekend closest to it).

The situation also leads to most animal charities from waiting until after the event has passed to adopt out black cats.

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RSPCA



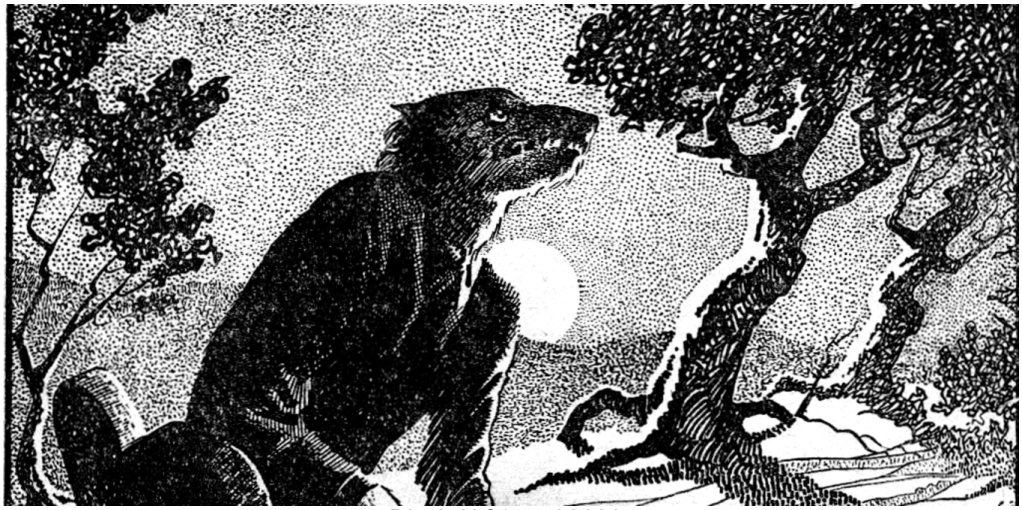
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Why we should welcome the return of 'Old Stinker', the English werewolf

20161030

theconversation.com



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Why we should welcome the return of 'Old Stinker', the English werewolf

October 30, 2016 4.39am EDT
Weird Tales

1. Sam George

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Over the last few months there has been something of a folk panic in Yorkshire, northern England, following reported sightings of an eight-foot werewolf with a very human face.

The werewolf "Old Stinker", also known as "The Beast of Barmston Drain" is not a recent phenomenon – it was first reported in the 18th century. But these sightings – concentrated around the town of Hull – are especially intriguing considering that English folklore is rather barren of werewolf stories. Most wolves were extirpated from England under the Anglo-Saxon kings and so ceased to be an object of dread to the people (though wolves did in fact survive in the UK up until the 1500s). So what could be behind these new werewolf sightings?

In literature, accounts of lycanthropy – humans transforming into werewolves – can be traced back to the epic of Gilgamesh in 2100BC, whereas wolf fables begin with Aesop's The Boy Who Cried Wolf, which was written at some point between 620 and 520 BC. Voluntary lycanthropy does appear from time to time – Virgil's Eclogues are thought to be the first such account (42-39 BC), but becoming a werewolf is more commonly seen as "a curse" or a sign of bestiality, or at worst of cannibalism.

Mansell Collection, London.

Most people have heard of witchcraft trials but werewolf trials are less well known – and those who were executed in werewolf trials in 16th and 17th-century France were believed to have a taste for human flesh. But these cannibalistic fears died down with the rise of psychoanalysis in the 19th century, when lycanthropy came to more commonly represent the "beast within" or everything animal that we have repressed in terms of our human nature.



A werewolf devouring a woman. From a XIX c. engraving.

History, then, provides us with two possible answers as to why people might think they've spotted werewolves in the English countryside. The first is a fear of violence, manifesting in anxieties around cannibalism. The second is a return of the repressed (perhaps the population of Hull are having a particularly Freudian spell?).

Needless to say, I cannot support these theories. I would argue instead that the answer lies in our cultural understanding of the werewolf and its connection to our native wolves. By reconsidering these primal links, we can begin to understand why people think they see werewolves – and this is pertinent to the appearance of Old Stinker himself.

Were(wolves)

It is important to consider the werewolf as the spectre brother or shadow self of the wolf and to perceive the history of lycanthropy as being inextricably bound up with humankind's treatment of wolves. For example, the case of Peter Stumpf, who was executed in Germany for being a werewolf in 1589, gained much noteriety in 16th-century Britain. It is notable that this interest corresponds with the extinction of the wolf in England in the 1500s.

Back to today. In 2015 the Open Graves, Open Minds project hosted the first international conference on werewolves at the University of Hertfordshire. This research drew attention to attempts to rewild the wolf in the UK and scholars began to question what would happen if wolves returned to our forests, as was prominent in associated media reports.

Our collaborations with the UK Wolf Trust generated further discussions around the possibility of rewilding large species in Britain including wolves and lynx. It is in this climate that new sightings of the Hull werewolf had begun to appear.



Who wants to re-wolf Britain? Nadezda Murmakova/Shutterstock

In July of this year newspapers reported that Old Stinker was terrorising women with his human face and very, very, bad breath (hence his name). The two most recent sightings were reported on in August: "Woman met eight-foot werewolf with human face" proclaimed the Metro newspaper. A full-scale werewolf hunt ensued after Old Stinker was spotted prowling an industrial estate. The werewolf had apparently eaten a German Shepherd dog and was seen leaping over fences like a modern day Spring-Heeled Jack (the folk devil that plagued Victorian London).

Wolf guilt

Importantly, Old Stinker supposedly inhabits a landscape that is thought to have seen some of the last UK wolves. So the emergence of the Hull werewolf can reopen debates about the spectre werewolf's relationship to the flesh and blood wolf. This coincides with a phase of severe

environmental damage. It has not taken the form of sudden catastrophe, but rather a slow grinding away of species. The result is a landscape constituted more actively by what is missing than by what is present, a “spectred”, rather than “a sceptered isle”. He represents not only a nation’s belief in him as a supernatural shapeshifter, but its collective guilt at the extinction of an entire indigenous species of wolf.

Far from dismissing the myth, my instincts are to embrace it and see it as a response to our cultural memory around what humans did to wolves.

The Old Stinker story tells us that belief in werewolves lives on beyond the actual lives of the wolves that were thought to inspire them. Rather than being dismissed as a rather fishy tale, Old Stinker can activate the wolf warrior in all of us and allow us to lament the last wolves that ran free in English forests. Far from being a curse, he is a gift: he can initiate rewilding debates and redeem the big bad wolf that filled our childhood nightmares, reminding us that it is often humans, not wolves or the supernatural, that we should be afraid of.

Comments

1. **Paul Handley**

I’m not entirely convinced that the reason the good people of Hull have taken to seeing werewolves is because their latent ‘wolf warrior’ has been stirred. A more reasonable, and altogether more rational, explanation might be that they’re probably pissed; and if you’ve ever been to Hull you’d know exactly why they’re pissed.

I’m reminded of a pertinent quote by G K Chesterton when he observes, ‘ a secular age is not an age when people believe in nothing, but rather, an age when they’ll believe in anything.’ The idea that contemporary werewolf sightings bear some kind of psycho-spiritual relationship to buried folk memories has everything to do with some romantic, ‘Company of Wolves’ Gothic fantasy blather, and absolutely nothing to do with anything that’s reasonably and rationally demonstrable.

1. **Sam George**

In reply to Paul Handley

Thank you getting the conversation started. Firstly, as a Mancunian I am aware of certain prejudices around drinking cultures in northern cities and I don’t think it is helpful to blame alcohol consumption for a local myth which can be traced back 200 years. Secondly, folklore and gothic literature are both perfectly respectable and valuable disciplines and should not be dismissed as ‘blather’. My background is actually in literature and science and the interface between these things.is what interests me most together with the idea of a manifestation of cultural memory. There exists a tension between what is recorded by historians and what subsists within a culture’s collective memory and it is believed to be in the literary-cultural that the collective memory is stored. My idea here is to look at the werewolf as a spectre wolf and this area is associated with a long standing and enduring wolf population, now extinct. This is not a gothic fantasy - it looks at the relationship between myth, animal/human boundaries and environmental damage in this area of the Yorkshire wolds. .

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CRIME NOVEMBER 4, 2016 2:12 PM

Wife makes up affair to make her cheating husband jealous. Now the other man is dead.



Bradenton Police captain talks about Thursday's homicide 1:15

1 of 2

BY JESSICA DE LEON
jdeleon@bradenton.com

BRADENTON — Derrick Frazier was cheating on his wife, and so she decided to make him jealous by making up an affair of her own. But she didn't count on her husband killing the other man.

At about 6 a.m. Thursday, police were called to the 1100 block of Fifth Street West in Bradenton to reports of gunfire. Officers arrived to find Dequan Randolph dead from an apparent gunshot wound.

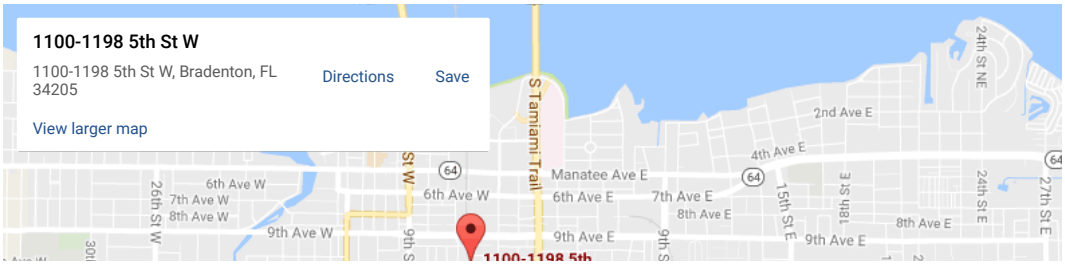
Eyewitnesses, including Frazier's wife, at the scene were able to provide detectives with the Manatee County Sheriff's Office Homicide Investigative Unit details about what happened, enabling them to immediately identify Frazier as the suspect.

An alert was put out for Frazier and the Ford pickup truck he was driving and within three hours of the shooting he was in police custody.

On Friday afternoon Frazier, charged with second-degree murder, made his first appearance before Circuit Judge Gilbert Smith Jr. via video conference. Smith ordered Frazier be held without bond at the Manatee County jail.

Lead homicide detective Jim Curulla detailed what Frazier's wife and a second eye-witness told him at the scene.

"She stated that she and Mr. Frazier had been been married since August and that he was seeing another female and she was trying to make him jealous so she made up a relationship with Mr. Randolph," Curulla said.







Google

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Frazier's wife was outside a home in the 1100 block of Fifth Street West along with the other eyewitness talking to Randolph when Frazier pulled up in the pickup truck.

"No words were exchanged," Curulla said.

The witnesses said Frazier put the gun up to Randolph and shot him in the center of his chest, then walked away, got in the pickup truck and drove off. The Medical Examiner's Office confirmed that Randolph had been shot at close range, the detective said.

Later when Frazier was interviewed by detectives, he gave several different accounts as to what happened, including first denying he had even been at the scene.

Frazier's last account was that he had been driving past when he saw the victim with his wife, got out of the pickup truck and Randolph brandished a firearm and a struggle ensued, Curulla said. That conflicted with the ME's report and the eyewitness accounts.

Frazier's mother was in the courtroom, but she did not speak during the hearing.

Assistant State Attorney Art Brown argued the case against Frazier met the standards of the Arthur rule, based on a 1980 Florida Supreme Court ruling that "the proof of guilt is evident and the presumption of guilt is great."

Smith ordered that Frazier be held without bond, and appointed the Public Defender's Office to represent him until he hires a private attorney. Frazier indicated that he could afford to do so.

Jessica De Leon: 941-745-7049, @JDeLeon1012

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Witches' marks: public asked to seek ancient scratchings in buildings

Maev Kennedy
Sunday 30 October 2016 Last modified on Sunday 30 October 2016

theguardian.com

Historic England keen to track markings typically found around old windows and doorways, used to ward off evil spirits



Markings in Tithe Barn, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire. Photograph: Peter Williams/PA Witches' marks on a barn door in Laxfield, Suffolk. Photograph: Conceal Reveal Archaeologists examine the markings at Knole in Kent. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

The public is being encouraged to help map Britain's historic obsession with the paranormal by searching for ancient scratchings in old buildings, used as charms against witchcraft and evil spirits.

Witch marks fit for a king beguile archaeologists at Knole

Marks discovered during extensive conservation were carved within months of Gunpowder Plot at great house in Sevenoaks for anticipated visit of James I

Historic England would like help to find more of the marks, typically concentrated around entry points seen as vulnerable such as windows, chimneys and doorways.



Faint symbols have been recorded in buildings and sites across England, including Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon, the Tower of London, and Wookey Hole caves in Somerset – where a tall stalagmite has been shown to tourists for centuries as the petrified body of a witch.

The patterns include flower-like designs made with compasses and dividers, pentangles, intertwined Vs and Ms for the Virgin Mary, and tangles of lines which it was believed confused spirits who attempted to follow them. Tadpole-shaped scorch marks made with a candle flame have also been found.



Witches' marks on a barn door in Laxfield, Suffolk. Photograph: Conceal Reveal Archaeologists examine the markings at Knole in Kent. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

Historic England's historic buildings inspector, Nick Molyneux, said: "More efficient oil lamps in the 19th century seem finally to have banished witches. We see them from the 16th century on, often in buildings already centuries old, but there could well be earlier and later marks that just haven't been recorded."

Molyneux, who spotted a mass of marks on the mantelpiece of an old timber-framed house in Warwickshire this week, recorded witches' marks at Shakespeare's birthplace several years ago, on timbers of the staircase leading to the cellar. He said: "They possibly date from the period when the house became a pub, and the beer would have been stored there. You certainly wouldn't have wanted witches turning your beer sour: that really would have been a disaster.

"Basically the marks have been recorded where people have taken the trouble to go and look for them. They are well recorded in many churches, but much less well so in secular buildings. We just don't have enough data to say whether they are more concentrated in certain parts of the country, or whether patterns are regional, so these are questions we would really like help in answering."

Confusingly, carpenters' marks indicating how the timbers should be assembled, masons' marks, and doodles by bored apprentices are often found in the same buildings or even on the same timbers and stone.



Witches' marks on a barn door in Laxfield, Suffolk. Photograph: Conceal Reveal Archaeologists examine the markings at Knole in Kent. Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA

The marks coincide with a period when most interiors lit by rush lights or tallow candles would have been extremely dark once night fell, and when belief in witchcraft and trials of unfortunates accused of it were at their height. The first specific law against witchcraft was only introduced under Henry VIII in 1542, and in the 17th century, James I was preoccupied with witchcraft and wrote a treatise on the subject. Recent conservation work revealed a mass of witches' marks carved into the timbers of rooms which were prepared for his visit at Knole, a palatial house in Kent now owned by the National Trust.

The last woman jailed for witchcraft in England was Scottish-born Helen Duncan, a medium arrested while holding a seance in 1944, and accused of betraying war secrets. She was prosecuted for fraud and witchcraft, and served nine months in Holloway prison.

The witches' marks are properly known as apotropaic marks, from the Greek word for avoiding evil.

Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England, said: "They really fire the imagination and can teach us about previously held beliefs and common rituals. Ritual marks were cut, scratched or carved into our ancestors' homes and churches in the hope of making the world a safer, less hostile place."

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Witches Allegedly Stole Penises and Kept Them as Pets in the Middle Ages | Broadly

vice.com

by Callie Beusman
Sep 19 2016 7:30 PM

According to a 15th century guide to detecting and eradicating witchcraft, witches were capable of making penises vanish—and some even kept them in nests and fed them oats.

Since time immemorial, men have worried irrationally about perceived threats to their penises. Long before there was castration anxiety, there was something far more sinister: the myth of phallus-stealing witches who kept wriggling, dismembered members as pets.

The best-known description of this practice occurs in the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a 15th century witch hunting manual written by Heinrich Kramer. Historians typically regard it as a ludicrous and misogynistic text that nonetheless resulted in countless vicious murders of women accused of witchcraft; in *The Salem Witch Trials Reader*, Frances Hill describes it as "one of the most terrifying and obnoxious books ever written." The *Malleus* is rife with obvious anxieties about female sexual desire—as folklorist Moira Smith notes in her paper, *Penis Theft in the Malleus Maleficarum*, "Many of the crimes (*maleficia*) attributed to witches concerned sexuality: copulation with incubus devils, procuring abortions, causing sterility and stillbirth, and impeding sexual relations between husbands and wives."

In the Middle Ages, witches were thought to have various magical dick-ruining capabilities, the most sinister of which is the ability to make the sex organ vanish entirely. According to Smith, the *Malleus Maleficarum* details three specific case studies in which witches were said to have magically deprived men of their penises. The first two simply involve men having their genitals hidden by some magical illusion—witches "can take away the male organ," Heinrich Kramer writes, "not indeed by despoiling the human body of it, but by concealing it with some glamour."

The third account notoriously mentions the phenomenon of witches keeping disembodied penises as pets and feeding them oats and other nutritious grains:

[W]hat shall we think about those witches who somehow take members in large numbers—twenty or thirty—and shut them up together in a birds' nest or some box, where they move about like living members, eating oats or other feed? This has been seen by many and is a matter of common talk. It is said that it is all done by devil's work and illusion, for the senses of those who see [the penises] are deluded in the way we have said.

Kramer goes on to describe one man's quest to restore his missing member. By his account, the poor, castrated fellow "approached a certain witch" who instructed him to "climb a particular tree where there was a nest containing many members, and allowed to take any one he liked." (He was unfortunately rebuffed after trying to pick a particularly large one because "it belonged to a parish priest.")

Gonad-bearing flora were not uncommon in the Middle Ages. In a 2010 article published in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, historian Johan J. Mattelaer states, "Between the end of the 13th century and the early 16th century, the phallus tree was quite a phenomenon." Penis trees flourished throughout Europe, according to his research: A 14th century French manuscript contains

two images of nuns harvesting penises from trees and tucking them into their robes; a wood carving from the early 15th century currently kept at a museum in Germany depicts a woman casually plucking penises while her lover peruses a vulva tree; and a decorative badge found in the Netherlands "shows a couple making love under a phallus tree, possibly being watched by a *voyeur*."

In 2000, archaeologists uncovered a particularly impressive penis tree specimen: a massive mural from the 13th century, located in Tuscany. It depicts a tree covered in male sex organs ("It is indeed a phallus tree!" Mattelaer notes jovially), all of which were "disproportionately large and... clearly in an aroused state." By the noble plant's roots stand eight women, two of whom appear to be fighting over a penis and one of whom is trying to knock one off a branch using a stick. Beside them is another woman who appears to be mostly uninvolved—but who, upon closer inspection, as Mattelaer notes, "has one of the fruits of the tree protruding from her bottom." George Ferzoco, the director of the Center for Tuscan studies, has argued that the mural constitutes "the earliest depiction in art of women acting as witches," citing ancient Tuscan folklore about witches keeping penises captive in nests.

In the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Kramer writes, "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which in women is insatiable." In its purest essence, the penis tree—and its association with endlessly lascivious witches—raises a compelling question: If dick grew on trees, would anyone need men?

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Witness to a Hanging: California's Haunted Trees

kcet.org

July 30, 2013



trees_4.jpg

"Hangmans Tree" (with supporting guy wires) along Big Oak Flat Road (State Route 120), Second Garotte, Tuolumne County, 1951. | Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.

In partnership with Boom Magazine: *Boom: A Journal of California is a new, cross-disciplinary publication that explores the history, culture, arts, politics, and society of California.*

This article was originally published in Boom: A Journal of California.

When a man dies hanging from a tree, is that tree an accessory to the act or a witness? In legal terminology, a "witness tree" is a boundary marker, whereas in popular culture, a "witness tree" is an arboreal survivor at a historic site. At Gettysburg National Military Park, for example, the National Park Service has made an inventory of all of the battlefield orchard trees still standing; these living relics function as markers of collective memory. When Californians think about floral witnesses, they reflexively turn to sequoias or their cousins, the redwoods, and wish that they could speak. The impulse to personify them goes back a long time. "Could these magnificent and venerable forest giants of Calaveras County be gifted with a descriptive historical tongue, how their recital would startle us," wrote James Hutchings, the pioneering promoter, in 1865. From his generation to ours, people have imagined the Big Tree's perspective on ancient Old World events. "Are you as old as Noah?" inquired the clergyman Thomas Starr King to one of the "vegetable Titans" in 1861. "Do you span the centuries as far as Moses? Can you remember the time of Solomon?" Sequoias are estranging: they take our imaginations to distant times and faraway places; they offer a bridge between the shallows of historical time and the unfathomable depths of geological time. There is value in that. But California has much better candidates for local witness trees -- namely, "hang trees" that force us to think about the state's violent history of uprooting amidst its countervailing history of putting down roots. 1



View of the "Hanging Tree" in Calabasas, Los Angeles County, 1939. | Photograph by Dick Whittington. Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

In 1847, even before the end of the US-Mexico War and the discovery of gold, the governor and general of Alta California capitulated to an emissary of Col. John C. Frémont outside of San Fernando. Supposedly they made treaty beneath an oak -- a tree later commemorated by Anglo-Americans as the "Oak of Peace." In fact, the transition following the Gold Rush brought discord and violence, as witnessed by certain native plants, mainly oaks and sycamores. A postcard, printed circa 1900, shows a knotted oak near Julian, in San Diego County, and a rhyme in the tree's voice:

In the days of old

in the days of gold
nuggets were picked by the peck.
On a limb of mine,
in eighteen seventy nine,
a man was hung by the neck.2

The American tradition of lynching transcended the white-black milieu of the Deep South. Two social historians, William Carrigan and Clive Webb, have made a strong documentary case that the "lynching rate" for Mexican-Americans was comparable to that for African Americans.3 California led the way in anti-Mexican and anti-Chinese vigilantism. According to legend, Joaquín Murrieta -- one of the great figures in Gold Rush and Chicano history -- chose his second career in banditry in response to the hanging of his half brother. Even after the placer gold petered out, Californians of Mexican descent, Californios -- often called "greasers," a word on a par with "niggers" -- continued to be lynched at a rate wildly disproportionate to their overall population. (As for Indians, settlers were more likely to murder them without any pretense of legality). Occasionally, Californios killed in common cause with Anglos. In 1867 a volunteer militia under the command of Andrés Pico captured and hanged two outlaws, associates of the bandit Juan Flores, for the murder of the sheriff of Los Angeles. It took much less provocation for white Angelenos to attack their Chinese neighbors. According to one witness of the 1871 "Chinese Massacre," enforcers erected all kinds of impromptu gallows; "trees, awnings, lamp posts, even farmer's wagons were thus utilized, until eighteen ghastly corpses -- one that of a mere child -- dangled about the street." 4



Commemorative plaque, Orchard Hills, Irvine, Orange County, 2008. | Photograph by Chris Jepsen.

Retributory violence could also cut across race and ethnicity. This was especially true in the early years of the Gold Rush, when, according to a forty-niner from France, "It seemed as if every prison in every civilized country had sent the elite of its inmates out here to colonize this country."5 In a high-stakes, all-male atmosphere, in the absence of regular law enforcement, vigilance committees meted out punishment to accused criminals of every background -- Anglo-Americans, Irishmen, Australians, Frenchmen, Belgians, Chileans, Sonorans, Californios, Miwoks. Death by hanging wasn't the only extralegal remedy in the gold camps. Lynch courts also dictated banishment, branding, whipping -- or a combination of all three. In many cases, vigilantes relieved the accused of his shirt, tied him to a tree, or forced him to hug its trunk, and administered the rawhide.

A tree allowed two methods of killing. Most commonly, the accused stood on a movable object -- a bench or a horse -- with the tree-bound noose around his neck. In the absence of such a removable platform, he might be convinced to climb the tree and jump off. All too often, the branch's height was insufficient for the force of gravity to snap the poor man's neck. Desperately, he grabbed at the rope as he choked to death, while onlookers tried to restrain his hands. To avoid excessive unpleasantries, careful vigilantes pinioned the victim's arms in advance. The second method of tree hanging inflicted even crueler agony. The executioner jerked the roped person up and down, like a piñata, until the neck finally broke. Sometimes a kangaroo court strung up the accused, then let him

down temporarily for the purpose of extracting a coerced confession, and finally killed him with the satisfaction of justice served.



"Hangmans Tree" (view from the road). | Courtesy of the Bancroft Library.

Public executions attracted large audiences. Gathered under a tree, the community of spectators gave tacit approval to lynching. Petty property crimes like raiding a sluice box or rustling a horse could lead to summary death penalties in the gold fields. Occasionally, a softhearted bystander tried to intercede. A Methodist missionary urged a lynch mob to take pity on its prisoner, a teenaged thief, a "mere tool and victim of the older criminals who had made their escape." Send him back to his dear old mother in the States, pleaded the man of the cloth. Momentarily rebuffed, the vigilantes dispersed. They reorganized in the night and dragged the accused from jail. "The tree on which the boy was hanged was a healthy, vigorous young oak, in full leaf," wrote the preacher. "*In a few days its every leaf had withered!*" 6

Gold Rush executioners did not mark their gallows; eyewitnesses typically only mention "a convenient oak tree." In a few mining camps, the tree of convenience earned its own name through repeated use. Most famously, the town of Jackson, in Amador County, fussed over its "Hangman's Tree," located on Main Street next to a saloon. At least ten men died here -- seven Mexicans, one Chilean, one European (variously identified as German, Swiss, and Swedish), and one indigenous man. In 1854 a French-language newspaper announced -- ironically, one assumes -- that it had opened a subscription to purchase the notorious tree to make a carved statue of Judge Lynch. After a town-wide conflagration in 1862, residents of Jackson cut down the blackened bough; in response, a regional newspaper opined that California's "most remarkable tree" should have merited preservation. A pioneer-era historian informs us that this plant (an interior live oak) was "never very beautiful, but was a source of so much pride to the citizens" that they engraved a likeness of it on Amador County's first seal. Similarly, when the namesake tree of Placerville -- known popularly as Hangtown -- withered and died, residents turned its wood into souvenir canes. In 1941 a donated heirloom piece of the Hangtown Oak found its way into the handle of the specially made shovel used to lay the cornerstone of Bank of America's headquarters in San Francisco. 7



Neon sign for the Hangmans Tree Historic Spot tavern, Placerville, El Dorado County, 2006. | Photograph by Thomas Hawk.

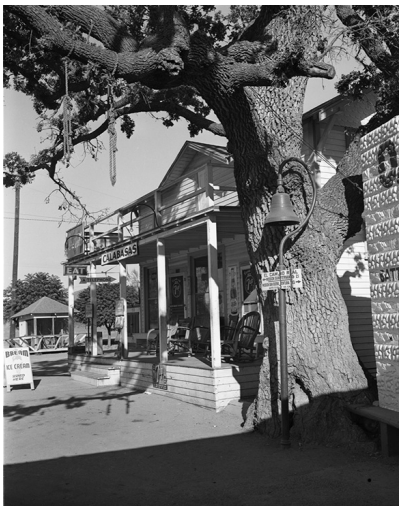
Re-rooting followed uprooting; commemoration followed violence. In the post-pioneer period, "Hangman's Tree" became a generic place-name and the subject of fakelore. Many towns boasted of having one, and invented or exaggerated the number of people killed. In 1896 a San Francisco paper repeated the legend that over forty people "passed into eternity" from the largest limb of Hangman's Oak near Copperopolis. The next year, newspapers across the nation printed a syndicated story -- a fond and plainly racist obituary -- about the "famous gallows tree of San Bernardino." From its branches, supposedly, more than fourteen men had "swung into eternity," and in its shade "some of the most thrilling events in the history of the wresting

of the golden state of California from Indian half breeds and Mexican domination have been planned." In the 1930s the Native Daughters of the Golden West erected plaques to commemorate the genuine lynching trees in Jackson and in Placerville, seat of El Dorado County. A generation later, a second plaque erected beside Placerville city hall asked for empathy for the executioners: "let us not judge them too harshly for those were the rough days of the great gold rush." The official state historical landmark sign stands in front of the shuttered Hangman's Tree bar on Main Street; according to the placard, the stump of the tree lies beneath the building. Until 2008, as an added effect for tourists, a dummy on a noose hung above the tavern's neon sign. 8

Long before, tourism boosters in Gold Country placed unofficial signs on a massive oak tree along the main access road to Yosemite National Park near the ghost town evocatively named Second Garrote. In 1932 the California Department of Public Works severely pruned this decaying tree to prevent falling limbs from killing automobilists. Supported by guy wires, the amputated framework of "'Hangmans' Tree" stood as a roadside attraction (next to the falsely advertised "Bret Harte Cabin") through the sixties. In 1942 some xenophobe pinned to its trunk the US military's relocation order for all persons of Japanese ancestry living in California. 9



Eucalyptus "Hangman's Tree" with noose, Ghost Town, Knott's Berry Farm, Orange County, 2012. Photograph by Loren Javier.



The "Hanging Tree" in Calabasas, Los Angeles County, 1939. | Photographs by Dick Whittington. Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

Legendary trees occasionally appeared in suburban settings, too. In 1930 Outpost Estates in Los Angeles invited prospective buyers on a guided tour to the "Hollywood hangman's tree," a California sycamore at which "more than thirty persons" met their maker. As whimsically reported by the Los Angeles Times, the property developer dedicated this arboreal landmark in conjunction with the unveiling of five Mediterranean model homes. 10 In Orange County, on the side of Highway 39, the wildly popular Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant added an adjacent "Ghost Town Village" -- the beginnings of the Knott's Berry Farm amusement park -- in 1940. This simulacrum of a Gold Rush camp included a eucalyptus ornamented with a noose.



The folkloric hang tree achieved its final incarnation at Calabasas, a wealthy suburban enclave at the edge of the San Fernando Valley. For decades residents attached nooses to a coast live oak on the main road; the chamber of commerce used a likeness of the "Hanging Tree" as a logo. According to doubtful town tradition, members of Tiburcio Vásquez's outlaw gang died here. In the postwar years the massive tree, located next to a Union 76 gas station, declined and died -- possibly due to a gasoline leak. It was pruned down to its core and festooned with a larger noose. In 1965 this emblem of the Old West made way for the Space Age. Los Angeles-based Rocketdyne, a division of North American Aviation, designer of the second-stage launch vehicle for the Saturn V, needed to transport a prototype rocket through Calabasas to its testing facility in Simi Hills. Even in its amputated state, the landmark tree created a bottleneck for the oversize

Sign for "Hangman's Tree," Ghost Town, Knott's Berry Farm. | Photograph by Loren Javier.

load. To solve the problem, a crane operator carefully transported the lifeless 30-foot trunk down the road to Leonis Adobe, a Calabasas house once owned by a prominent nineteenth-century Basque rancher. Preservationists subsequently restored the adobe and converted it to a living history museum that became a cornerstone of "Old Town," a shopping and restaurant district. Here the beloved mock gallows, concreted into place, stood until 1995, when a winter storm toppled it. The desiccated wood shattered instantly, and in the aftermath, someone absconded with the decorative noose. Some old-timers insisted that a still-standing live oak across the street, by another bell-shaped sign marking the historic El Camino Real, was the *real* Hangman's Oak. 11

The multiple second lives of the frontier "hang tree" reveal something unsettling about the Golden State. Beauty, violence, and heritage share the same scene. In the span of one century, Californians progressed from lynching fellow fortune-seekers from stately trees to making up stories about such trees to preserving the remnants of pseudo-historic lynching trees. If these "witnesses" could be compelled to give testimony, what florid untruths we would hear--along with haunting true accounts of expulsions from Eden.

Notes:

1. James M. Hutchings, "Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity in California" (London, 1865), 13; Thomas Starr King, A Vacation among the Sierras: Yosemite in 1860 (San Francisco, 1962), 35-36 (originally published in Boston Evening Transcript, 12 Jan. 1861).

2. Postcard, ca. 1900, San Diego History Center, available for view online at Calisphere.

3. William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, "Forgotten Dead: Mob Violence Against Mexicans in the United States, 1848-1928" (Oxford, 2013). See also Warren Franklin Webb, "A History of Lynching in California since 1875" (M.A. thesis, UC Berkeley, 1935); Robert W. Blew, "Vigilantism in Los Angeles, 1935-1974," Southern California Quarterly 54 (March 1972): 11-30; David A. Johnson, "Vigilance and the Law: The Moral Authority of Popular Justice in the Far West," American Quarterly 33 (Winter 1981): 558-86; Christopher Waldrep, "The Many Faces of Judge Lynch: Extralegal Violence and Punishment in America" (New York, 2002), 49-61; Paul R. Spitzzeri, "Judge Lynch in Session: Popular Justice in Los Angeles, 1850-1875," Southern California Quarterly 87 (June 2005): 83-122; and Ken Gonzales-Day, "Lynching in the West, 1850-1935" (Durham, N.C., 2006). Gonzales-Day has also exhibited his artistic photographs of hang trees.

4. L. Vernon Briggs, "California and the West, 1881, and Later" (Boston, 1931), 122. On violence against indigenous peoples, begin with Brendan C. Lindsay, "Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873" (Lincoln, 2012). On violence against Chinese, see Scott Zesch, "The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871" (Oxford, 2012); and Jean Pfaelzer, "Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans" (New York, 2007). On banditry, see Lori Lee Wilson, "The Joaquín Band: The History Behind the Legend" (Norman, 2011); John Boessenecker, "Bandido: The Life and Times of Tiburcio Vasquez" (Norman, 2012); and Susan Lee Johnson, "Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush" (New York, 2000). In 2007, fire crews battling a blaze in the Santa Ana Mountains--part of the Irvine Ranch in Orange County -- stumbled upon a historical marker, erected in the centennial year 1967, that had been overgrown by weedy black mustard (picture on p. 73). See Mike Anton, "A Gnarled Reminder of California's Past," Los Angeles Times, 12 May 2009.

5. Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, trans., "A Frenchman in the Gold Rush: The Journal of Ernest de Massey, Argonaut of 1849" (San Francisco, 1927), 171.

6. O. P. Fitzgerald, "California Sketches," 4th ed. (Nashville, 1880), 161-67. Italics in original.

7. "A Memorable Tree Destroyed," Stockton Daily Independent, 6 Nov. 1862, quoted in Larry Cenotto, "Logan's Alley: Amador County Yesterdays in Picture and Prose," vol. 1 (Jackson, Calif., 1988), 156; Jesse D. Mason, "History of Amador County" (Oakland, 1881), 171. French-language newspaper reported in Daily Democratic State Journal (Sacramento), 6 April 1854. See also Richard Ferber, "Natural History of A Hanging Tree," "True West" (April 1998): 39-43. Placerville information from L. A. Norton, "Life and Adventures of Col. L. A. Norton" (Oakland, 1887), 293; and "Piece of Hangman's Tree Presented for Bank Ceremony," Mountain Democrat (Placerville, Calif.), 20 Feb. 1941. In addition to the above sources, I found many accounts of lynching in period newspapers available through the website of the California Digital Newspaper Collection.

8. "A Natural Gallows," San Francisco Call, 8 March 1896; "The Gallows Tree: Famous Live Oak of California That Is No More," printed in outlets as widespread as Philadelphia Times, Saturday Journal (Lewiston, Me.), Daily Times (New Brunswick, N.J.), Daily Tribune (Bismarck, N.D.), and Daily News (Des Moines, Iowa) in 1897.

9. H. Dana Bowers, "Doctor's Operate on 'Hangman's Tree' by Bret Harte Cabin," "California Highways and Public Works 12" (March 1933): 35. Anti-Japanese photograph in John W. Winkley, "The Sage of 49 Flat," Ghost Town News 2 (Dec. 1942): 12. Ghost Town News was a bimonthly western history magazine published from Ghost Town Village at Knott's Berry Place.

10. "Home Exhibit Visitors to See Hangman Tree," Los Angeles Times, 25 May 1930.

11. "Shoved Aside for Rocket," Los Angeles Times, 4 Feb. 1965; "Gallows Toppled," Los Angeles Times, 11 Feb. 1965; "Calabasas: Old 'Hanging Tree' Felled by Storm," Los Angeles Times, 27 Jan. 1995.

KCETLink, formerly Community Television of Southern California, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

FCC Public Inspection File

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Woman claims the Devil chased her into underground pipe in front of Pearl library

wjtv.com

By Donesha Aldridge Published: October 11, 2016, 11:00 am Updated: October 11, 2016, 5:08 pm



Photo: WJTV

Photo: WJTV

PEARL, Miss. (WJTV) — A woman got stuck in an underground pipe outside the Pearl Library Monday evening.

She told police that she went into the drainage pipe because the Devil chased her in there.

Lt. Brian McGairty said officers were called to the scene around 6:20 p.m. on Old Brandon Road. They were told that at a woman was stuck in an inlet 24-inch pipe underground in front of the library.

A local boy scout troop called police after they heard the woman screaming for help. The troop was there because they had a meeting at the library.

Lt. McGairty said the woman is about 100 pounds and is 26 years old.

She was able to navigate her way out of the pipe by the time first responders arrived on scene. That's when she told officials that she went into the drainage pipe because the Devil chased her in there, according to police.

Once she was out, they asked her why she went into the inlet drainage pipe and her response was the devil chased her in there, police said. She was taken to hospital for a physical and mental evaluation.

WJTV

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Woman orders spare ribs from Chinese restaurant - claims she received DOG PAWS

09:19, 20 Sep 2016 Updated 10:56, 20 Sep 2016 By Kara O'Neill

mirror.co.uk



Woman buys spare ribs from local Chinese takeaway...then claims they're DOG PAWS

A woman has claimed a Chinese takeaway restaurant served her a DOG PAW after she ordered spare ribs from the menu.

Ashley Jefferson was eating at the China Palace in Havre de Grace, Maryland, when she believes she made the horrific discovery.

Fighting the urge to throw up, Ashley then headed to the bathroom to record a Facebook video where she claimed the ribs had claws still attached.

In the video, she said: "There's nails still in this... those are claws."



Ashley Jefferson

The woman claims her spare rib is actually a dog paw

"I'm definitely keeping one of these and taking them to the health department to have them tested.

"All you Chinese food lovers, I suggest you reevaluate your life before you end up choking on a dog nail."

On September 15, she then posted a picture on Facebook, writing: "I googled a dead dog paw and took a pic of what they delivered to me... and tell me if I'm wrong but they look exactly the same."



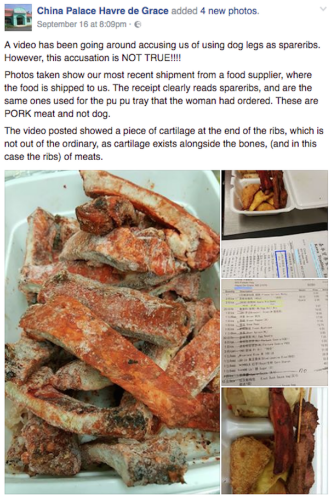
Ashley Jefferson

Ashley posted the video of her alleged discovery on her Facebook page

But the restaurant responded, refuting Ashley's claims.

In their own Facebook post, they wrote: "A video has been going around accusing us of using dog legs as spareribs. However, this accusation is NOT TRUE!!!!

"The video posted showed a piece of cartilage at the end of the ribs, which is not out of the ordinary, as cartilage exists alongside the bones, (and in this case the ribs) of meats."



Facebook / China Palace Havre de Grace

China Palace posted a statement on their Facebook page

They then shared an image of a document from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, which stated: "There is no evidence of any dog meat in this facility."

Ashley later posted a statement on Facebook, writing: "For everyone who has seen the video I had posted... that was my personal opinion, I let everyone know I was going to get it tested.

"Maybe I shouldn't right off the bat said it was a dog. I know I did not enjoy my meal there unfortunately.

"I let the owner know that if I was wrong, I would respectfully come in and apologise as well as on social media.

"This was not a 'get famous' stunt. Who would want to over a sad situation like this? I had NO IDEA it was going to blow up like this.

"It's not MO to go out of my way to ruin someone's life or business. I am getting a bunch of messages, good and bad, not really my cup of tea. I will let everyone know the results of the test... until then, cut me a break."

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Woman vacuuming gasoline sparks explosion at Titusville car wash

clickorlando.com

By James Sparvero - Reporter
Posted: 5:22 PM, October 13, 2016 Updated: 11:19 AM, October 14, 2016

TITUSVILLE, Fla. - Surveillance cameras at Shuttle Car Wash on Cheney Highway captures a potentially life-threatening situation.

The Titusville car wash owner Billy Barnwell says that at 5 p.m. Monday, an unknown woman vacuumed gasoline from the trunk of her car, causing the vacuum to explode.

"What are you thinking? I think even a child would know not to do that," said car wash customer Cecilia Quinn as News 6 showed her the video.

"It was a heck of an explosion. It just burnt everything up," said Barnwell as he showed News 6 the destroyed vacuum.

"If you saw the video, you've seen it. It scared the heck out of her."

News 6 showed that same video to customers Wednesday.

They reacted in shock to the woman's decision to vacuum gasoline.

"Wow, that's not good," laughed Tim Eichorn. "And then she just stands there and watches it."

"Oh jeez, Louise, you're kidding me." gasped Quinn. "She thought she could vacuum up gasoline."

"That's not my wife, by the way," joked Dave Gooden.

The owner said after the explosion the woman drove off.

No one was hurt but the owner and customers watching the video said the decision could have been tragic.

"Thank God, no one was standing over there," said Quinn. "What could have happened, I don't even want to think about it."

The vacuum will cost $500 to repair.

The woman has not returned to the car wash since.

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The woman who is allergic to water

By Zaria Gorvett 15 September 2016

bbc.com

BBC **The woman who is allergic to water**



Rachel's rare condition means that a bath is agony; even her own tears will scorch her face. How can the human body reject life's most basic necessity?

Rachel wakes up – and drinks a kind of poison that feels like a glass of stinging nettles. As it slips downs her throat, she can feel it blistering her skin, leaving a trail of red, itchy welts behind. Later that day, scorching drops of the stuff start falling from the sky. At the local leisure centre, she watches others splash around in a pool of the irritant. They seem unfazed, but the moment she dips her toe in, she's faced with burning pain.

No, this is not some bizarre alternate reality. This is the world of Rachel Warwick, who is allergic to water. It's a world where relaxing baths are the stuff of nightmares and snorkelling in tropical seas is as appealing as rubbing yourself with bleach. "Those things are my idea of hell," she says.

> The reaction makes me feel as if I've run a marathon – Rachel

Any contact with water whatsoever – even her own sweat – leaves Rachel with a painful, swollen and intensely itchy rash which can last for several hours. "The reaction makes me feel as if I've run a marathon. I feel really tired afterwards so I have to go and sit down for quite a while," she says. "It's horrible, but if I cry my face swells up".

Otherwise known as aquagenic urticaria, the condition is like being stung by a bush of particularly pernicious nettles, combined with the malaise of hay fever, every single day.

It's certainly unpleasant, but at this point you're probably wondering how Rachel is able to survive at all. We're reminded on almost a daily basis that water is life's most basic necessity – so much so that NASA's motto on the hunt for alien life is simply "follow the water". At least 60% of the human body is water; the average 70 kg adult contains around 40 litres.

So let's get a few things straight. For a start, the water in our bodies is apparently not a problem. The reaction is triggered by skin contact and occurs regardless of temperature, purity or salt content. Even bona fide, chemical-free, many-times distilled water will set it off.

“When I meet people there’s always a lot of confusion and all the usual questions – ‘how do you eat?’ ‘How do you drink?’ ‘How do you wash?’ The truth is you just have to suck it up and get on with it,” says Rachel.

Right from the beginning, aquagenic urticaria was as baffling to scientists as it is to the rest of us. Technically, the condition isn’t actually an allergy at all, since it’s likely caused by an immune reaction to something within the body, rather than an over-reaction to something foreign, such as pollen or peanuts.

The earliest theory to explain how it works is that water is interacting with the outermost layer of skin, which consists mostly of dead skin cells, or the oily substance which keeps skin moist. Contact with water may cause these components to release toxic compounds, which in turn leads to an immune reaction.

Others have suggested that water may simply dissolve chemicals in the layer of dead skin, allowing them to penetrate deeper where they can cause an immune reaction.

Indeed, treating the skin with chemical solvents – which allow more water into this layer – before exposure makes the reaction worse. But when the upper layer of skin is removed completely, the reaction goes ahead as normal.

Perhaps the most left-field idea is that it’s caused by pressure changes, which accidentally set off the immune alarm as water leaves the skin by osmosis.

Whatever the causes, according to Marcus Maurer, a dermatologist who founded the European Centre for Allergy Foundation (ECARF) in Germany, this is a devastating illness which can transform lives. “I have patients who have had urticaria for 40 years and they still wake up with wheals and oedema [swelling] every day,” he says.

Sufferers may be depressed or anxious, always worrying about when their next attack will strike. “In terms of quality of life impairment it’s one of the worst skin diseases you can have,” he says.

Rachel was around 12 years old when she was diagnosed, after noticing a rash after swimming. “My doctor heard what I had to say, and he was like ‘I think you have this’. I was really fortunate that he knew about it,” she says.

In the winter rain, Rachel can’t leave the house

She wasn’t sent for testing. The standard method for diagnosis is to keep the upper body wet for half an hour and see what happens. “He basically told me that what they’d put me through would be worse than the disease,” she says.

And while surviving with the condition is not a problem, enduring everyday life is another matter. In the winter when it rains a lot, for example, Rachel can’t leave the house.

For everyday activities such as washing up, Rachel’s husband – who is also her official carer – steps in. To wash, she limits herself to showering once a week. To minimise sweating, she wears light clothing and avoids exercise. Like others with the condition, Rachel drinks a lot of milk, since the reaction isn’t as bad as with water. Again, no one knows why this is.

For such a mysterious illness, the hunt for a cure has been suitably bewildering. At the moment, the standard treatment is to take powerful anti-histamines. To understand why, first we need to get to grips with what goes down during a reaction.

It all kicks off when immune cells in the skin, known as mast cells, release inflammatory histamine proteins. During a normal immune reaction, histamines are extremely helpful – making blood vessels leaky enough to allow white blood cells through to attack any intruders. During a reaction to water, all you get are the side-effects: fluid seeps out through their walls, causing the surrounding skin to swell up.

At the same time, histamine activates “itch neurons”, whose only role is to make us want to itch. The result is a patch of raised, itchy areas of skin known as welts.

In theory, anti-histamines should work every time. In practice, the drugs have decidedly mixed results.

Back in 2014, Rachel was sent to the ECARF in Berlin as part of a documentary, where doctors suggested she try a high dose. She did as they said – then put them to the test at her local swimming pool. It didn’t work. “Afterwards I was itching like crazy and I looked like I was diseased,” she says.

For years, anti-histamines were the only option. Then in 2008 Maurer and colleagues from the ECARF had an idea. “We didn’t evolve mast cells so that we could suffer from urticaria. So what gets them to do bad things?” he says.

The histamine-releasing cells of people with the condition look entirely normal, and they don’t have any more than the rest of us. So something else must be telling them to act up. From studies in the lab, the scientists thought the culprit might be IgE, the antibody responsible for true allergies, such as those to pollen or cats.

“Instead of reacting to something from the outside world, they’re producing IgE in response to something within themselves,” says Maurer.

All they needed was a drug which could block IgE’s effects. And as luck would have it, there was already a drug on the market which could do just that.

Omalizumab was originally developed as a treatment for asthma. “When we said ‘we’d like to use this anti-allergic drug in these patients’ the drug company said ‘why would you want to do that? It’s not an allergy, how can that work,’” says Maurer.

After convincing the sceptics, in August 2009 they put the idea to the test. Their patient was a 48-year old woman with another rare form of urticaria, which is triggered by pressure. For three years, the patient had been breaking out into a raised, itchy rash at slightest touch. It was so bad, it would happen when she combed her hair or dressed.

After just a week of treatment, the woman’s symptoms were visibly diminished. By the end of the month, they had completely disappeared.

Since then scientists have discovered omalizumab is effective against even the most obscure forms of urticaria – from reactions to sunlight to changes in temperature, to friction. “It’s amazing; I mean this drug is a complete game-changer,” says Maurer.

One of Maurer's first patients was a young professor who was reacting to his own sweat. He couldn't run for the bus without breaking out into a painful rash and, most importantly, could not give a lecture to his students because the slightest dampness on his brow was completely disfiguring. "He was basically ready to give up his academic career," says Maurer. After just a week on omalizumab, he was a completely different person.

It's safe, it's effective – it even works for aquagenic urticaria. This should be a happy ending. But there's a catch. The asthma drug is currently being used "off-label"; that is, the effectiveness of the drug against urticaria hasn't yet been demonstrated in a large-scale clinical trial. And most healthcare providers, from insurance companies to the UK's NHS, simply won't pay for drugs without one.

This is the problem Rachel encountered back in 2014, when the specialist in Berlin recommended omalizumab. At the moment, the drug would set her back around a thousand euros per month.

But finding enough patients for a trial could be problematic. Aquagenic urticaria affects around one in every 230 million people. By that estimate, there are only 32 people with the condition on the entire planet. "We are a big team here, we see more than 2,000 new urticaria patients every year. And we have three with aquagenic urticaria," says Maurer.

To complicate matters further, the drug is coming to the end of its patent. With so little time left to make any money out of it – and a handful of potential customers – convincing the company to invest in a trial would be extremely difficult. "I'm not sure that we will see such a trial," he says. Novartis, who market the drug as Xolair for asthma and other conditions, confirm they have no plans to develop the treatment for aquagenic urticaria. "We believe that the unlicensed use of drugs should be limited to cases where there is an unmet medical need that cannot be fulfilled by licensed medications or as permitted by the regulatory framework designed to protect patient safety," their spokesperson adds. After decades of research to solve the mystery disease, the final hurdle isn't science, but economics.

So what would Rachel do first if she found an effective treatment? That's easy. "I'd like to be able to go to swimming at the leisure centre. And go dancing in the rain," she says.

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16/09/2016 09:50 BST: This story has now been updated to include Novartis's statement.

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Woman with skull on stick leads Sacramento police to body

yahoo.com

AP Associated Press October 20, 2016

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — It sounds like a Halloween prank but Sacramento police say it was all too real.

Authorities say a homeless woman led them to a decomposed body after she was seen walking down the street with a human skull on a stick.

Police tell KTXL-TV (http://bit.ly/2emtEik) that the woman was spotted Wednesday on Connie Drive.

Police stopped her at an abandoned house.

Sgt. Bryce Heinlein says the woman told them she had found the skull and led them to an abandoned homeless camp a couple blocks away. That's where officers found the rest of a decomposing body.

The coroner will determine the identity of the remains and the cause of death.

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UPDATE: Police say woman falsely reported hundreds of 911 calls

wsaz.com

By Kelsey Hoak; Jatara McGee |
Posted: Fri 6:57 PM, Oct 28, 2016 |
Updated: Fri 8:59 PM, Oct 28, 2016

KANAWHA COUNTY, W.Va. (WSAZ) -- A woman is facing multiple counts of false reporting after troopers say she's called 911 hundreds of times in a month.



Kassandra Fridley, 28, is charged with falsely reporting an emergency.

According to a criminal complaint, troopers say Fridley has called the Kanawha County Metro 911 Center approximately 600 times over the past 26 days.

The criminal complaint explains that Fridley's fake calls range from medical emergencies, structure fires, burglaries, stabbings, shootings, hang up calls and various other incidents.

Troopers say the incidents were called in from several different phone numbers and most were described as being near Fridley's residence on Campbells Creek Drive in Tad.

Metro 911 dispatchers say Fridley disguised her voice several times and pretended to have different aliases of Michelle, Elizabeth and Sara, according to the criminal complaint.

Troopers say there were times where Fridley would identify herself as a child who needed medical assistance for a family member.

Often times multiple agencies would respond to the calls to find no such emergency had occurred.

Metro 911 cannot comment on an open investigation, but dispatchers say they have definitely noticed a big uptick in fake calls recently.

Matt Blalock, who is a shift lieutenant at Metro 911, says fake calls make their job as dispatchers more difficult and put people with real emergencies at risk.

"It's just frustration at our end," he says. "We still have to treat all these calls, even the false ones, we still have to treat that as a serious call for service."

According to the criminal complaint, Fridley's voice often seemed to reflect that she enjoyed the willful waste of resources she was imposing on the county.

She is being held in the South Central Regional Jail.

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wsaz.com/a?a=399038751

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Why Women Pretended to Be Creepy Rocks and Trees in NYC Parks During WWI

atlasobscura.com

Can you find the camouflaged women hiding in these photos?

by Lauren Young
October 06, 2016



Imagine taking a quiet stroll through the expansive wilderness of Van Cortlandt Park in Bronx, New York. You're surrounded by a forest of oak trees, stony ridges, and a tranquil lake—completely isolated and alone in nature. But in 1918, visitors to the 1,146-acre park were unaware that they were in the company of a group of women hiding among the rocks, trees, and grass.

"Weird shapes, the color of the rocks and earth, moved here and there, and from the tops of trees came loud halloos and catcalls from other shapeless objects," journalist Elene Foster wrote in the April 28, 1918 issue of the *New York Tribune.* "I stumbled over a hump of grass, which squealed when I stepped on it, and rose before me."



The women disguised in special (and fairly creepy) dried grass or "rock suits" were student military camouflage artists, or camoufleurs, of the Women's Reserve Camouflage Corps, a forgotten division of the National League for Women's Service.

Female artists across the United States joined the ranks of this highly specialized military group in New York to help with the war effort during World War I. They used their creativity and crafting skills to develop designs and patterns that mimicked the landscape to provide soldiers with added protection. Parks were used as laboratories to test different camouflage suits, and city streets doubled as studios for them to paint dazzling, distracting designs on battleships.

The photos uncovered by the National Archives and Records Administration reveal how the women hunched behind tree trunks or huddled against boulders, suddenly disappearing from view.

"The photos are really some of the most unusual I've come across during my time here," says Richard Green, an archivist who's worked at the National Archives for five years.

He found the 42 peculiar photos of the women in Van Cortlandt Park while working on the archive's World War I film and photo digitization project. "There would be a picture of the girl and she would just fall down and disappear."





While the photos appear somewhat comical today, they tell of the historical significance of these female camoufleurs, Green says.

Women played a crucial role during the war effort, working in factories, hospitals, machine gun battalions, and many other military organizations. At the same time, camouflage became an increasingly important military tactic during World War I.



French painter and military telephonist Lucien-Victor Guirand de Scévola is said to be the first to suggest painting artillery earth-toned colors to conceal soldiers from the enemy. In November 1914, the French established a camouflage service and began developing different techniques, and recruiting artists, sculptors, architects, mold-makers, and cartoonists for the group.

It quickly evolved from decoys and dummies to a sophisticated art form of elaborately disguised rooftops and painted battleships.



As men had to leave camouflage units to fight at the front, the work was left to women. Following in the footsteps of England and France, the United States began training a group of 40 female artists on April 1, 1918 in New York, forming the first class of the Women's Reserve Camouflage Corps.

The first group came from different parts of New York state and from Philadelphia, almost all of them working artists. To become part of the exclusive military unit, women had to have some training in painting, sculpture, photography, or wood carving, and be in perfect physical condition. All the women in the camouflage corps took the regular army physical examination. While there was no age limit, most women were in their early 30s, the oldest member of the first class being 45. After paying a $43 fee ($25 for the uniform, $18 for tuition), the women were ready to learn the art and science of camouflage.

"Camouflage is the sort of work which has a strong appeal to the woman with imagination who at the same time is clever at doing things with her hands," wrote Foster.



The entire top floor of 257 Madison Avenue served as the main headquarters. Lieutenant H. Ledyard Towle of the 71st Infantry, who directed the division, conducted the same training he gave to the men of the New York Camouflage Corps. In order to create the best protection for soldiers, Towle firmly believed that the women should be taught the ins-and-outs of modern warfare, including army formations and maneuvers.

The intensive three-month course consisted of three indoor lectures and two open "field days" per week, where the women would survey the environment and test their designs. The successful camouflage techniques would be sent to the U.S. military.



Camoufleurs would don "rock suits" which could keep the wearer safe from detection at a distance of 10 feet, Green wrote in a blog post about the photos. "Observation suits" were colored so the person could blend into the sky, snow, or ice.

Park police were aware that the Women's Reserve Camouflage Corps were experimenting in Van Cortlandt Park, but some admitted that they often couldn't spot them. A policeman informed Foster that he knew they were among the rocks, "but ye can't see thim till they move."



They also had to learned how to disguise rail lines, depots, aircraft hangars, supply bases, and trenches. A British zoologist noticed that gray ships were easily spotted, and suggested painting abstract, multicolored patterns to confuse the enemy. So the group mastered a unique form of camouflage for battleships called "dazzle camouflage."

The United States Navy started using dazzle camouflage in March 1918, painting 1,250 ships with odd patterns. Out of the 96 ships sunk by German U-boats after March 1918, only 18 of them were camouflaged, Green wrote.

All 42 photos of the Women's Reserve Camouflage Corps are still in the process of being added to the National Archive catalog, but Green says that they will be made available for everyone's enjoyment soon. While the women may have spent quite a bit of their time hiding in the forest cloaked in hooded suits, they wanted their work to be taken seriously.





“Please don’t go away with the idea that all we do is make costumes and dress up in them,” the camoufleur dressed as a patch of grass told Foster. “We are going to do every sort of camouflage work that they will allow us to do, from painting a battleship to making a fake tree.”

Try to see if you can find the Women's Reserve Camouflage Corps artists in these photos:





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'World's most expensive cat food' comes at an eye-watering price

14:58, 10 Nov 2016 Updated 14:59, 10 Nov 2016 By Anthony Harvison

mirror.co.uk



Palamedes PR

A year's supply of British Banquet cat food will cost you £9,000

A luxury cat food for the “insanely rich” goes on sale this week – and a year's supply costs an eye-watering £9,000.

‘British Banquet’ contains Arenkha caviar, line-caught Scottish salmon, hand-caught Norfolk lobster, and locally-sourced Devon crab.

Each gourmet pack also includes organic asparagus, quinoa, and saffron for that “extra touch of luxury and refinement”.

The “super-premium” fodder, which contains no preservatives, additives or artificial colours, is also GM-free.

It is not only fit for human consumption but tastes “absolutely wonderful” should owners feel tempted to try it, manufacturer Green Pantry claims.

A month’s supply costs nearly £750, which equates to a staggering £9,000 per year, £12.50 per serving or about £1.25 per mouthful.



Palamedes PR

British Banquet contains lots of luxury ingredients, including caviar

There’s some good news: UK orders will be delivered free.

But customers from outside of the UK can expect to pay up to £150 more – a total of £900 - for a four-week supply to cover postage and packaging, and administration costs.

Simon Booth, of Green Pantry, said the limited-edition product has been created to satisfy demand from celebrities and other VIPs who are financially capable of “treating their cats to the finer things in life”.

“We offer a wide range of highly affordable and delicious holistic pet foods for cats and dogs, but British Banquet is for those few insanely rich pet owners to whom money is no object,” he said.



Simon Booth says the food is aimed at "insanely rich pet owners"

“We see it appealing to celebrities, managing directors and CEOs, ambassadors and other VIPs who wish to give their cats the finest things in life.

Palamedes PR

“We’ve based British Banquet around seafood as this is excellent for cats’ nutritional needs well-being and, with the exception of the caviar, have chosen only the best British produce.”

The food, which took Green Pantry more than two years to develop, will cost £249.99 for a 2kg bag – more than 30 times the price of standard kitty fodder.

Based upon a normal serving, it will take the average cat just 10 days to consumer it at a cost of almost £25 per day, or £12.50 per bowl.



Palamedes PR

The cat food contains crab and asparagus

It means a single month’s supply of British Banquet, which like all Green Pantry cat food is grain-free, will cost a wallet-busting £749.97.

But Booth, of Green Pantry, said the cost is worth every penny given the nutritional benefits it offers.

These include the company’s unique Pura-Pel herbal pre-mix to aid natural control of intestinal and external hygiene.

Green Pantry products are already stocked by pet shops across the UK and in stores such as Pets at Home, Barkers and Waitrose.

But British Banquet will only be available by special prior request via the Green Pantry website – www.greenpantry.co.uk - and will only come to market if there enough takers.

“Given the remarkably high cost of the ingredients, we can’t mass-produce a product of this quality,” Booth said.

DailyMirror
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World's tallest church being eroded by peeing, vomiting vandals

By Katie Dowd
Published 11:39 am, Monday, October 24, 2016

sfgate.com

http://www.sfgate.com/weird/article/Worlds-tallest-church-eroded-by-pee-ulm-minster-10165490.php



A view of Ulm Minster. Photo: Ullstein Bild/ullstein Bild Via Getty Images

This is why we can't have nice things.

Employees at Ulm Minster, a church in Germany with the world's tallest church tower, are begging the public to stop urinating and vomiting on the tower's stone base. Building maintenance head Michael Hilbert told the Suedwest Presse that the bottom of the tower is "coated with urine and vomit" and that the stone base is being eaten away by the human waste.

The city of Ulm tried doubling the fines for public urinators to 100 euros, but the fine has had little effect. A city spokesman said it was hard to catch people in the act despite increased police patrols in the area.



The famous gargoyles of Ulm Minster. Photo: Westend61/Getty Images



The moon rises next to the main tower of the cathedral of Ulm. Photo: THOMAS KIENZLE, AP

The tower of Ulm Minster stretches 530 feet into the sky. Construction on the magnificent church began in 1377 but wasn't finished until May 31, 1890. It survived the Allied bombing of Ulm late in World War II — over 80-percent of the city center was destroyed — but now is in peril due to peeing idiots.

Church officials hope the police will help further in their preservation quest and that the city will start providing free public toilets during events in the church square.

"This is about preserving law and order," Hilbert says.

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Ridiculous History: The Civil War's Worst Cup of Coffee

by Christopher Hassiotis
October 15, 2016

howstuffworks.com

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Ridiculous History: The Civil War's Worst Cup of Coffee



It doesn't look like it would taste that bad. ngIf: article.metadata.primaryMedia.override.creditUrl ngIf: !article.metadata.primaryMedia.override.creditUrl Robert Lamb/HowstuffWorks end ngIf: !article.metadata.primaryMedia.override.creditUrl Robert Lamb/HowstuffWorks

by Robert Lamb

War is hell — and sometimes the coffee is, too.

Consider the American Civil War, a four-year bloodbath that divided a nation and claimed the lives of between 650,000 and 850,000 Union and Confederate soldiers. Looking back at such dark times, there's solace to be found in moments of humanity, be it sweeping acts of moral responsibility or small fragments of everyday life sprinkled amongst the madness, like complaining about wretched coffee.

Food industrialization has always progressed alongside modern warfare. An army, as the saying goes, marches on its stomach, so the streamlined production, preservation and delivery of food offer a definitive military advantage.

Evaporated milk is a fantastic example of a successful industrialized food product. It's essentially just milk dried into a paste and, in the process, pasteurized. All you have to do is add water and, behold, you've got yourself some reconstituted milk. (Condensed milk is roughly the same idea, only with a whole lot more sugar added.) It's not perfect, but it gets the job done, which is why the U.S. government purchased *a lot* ofcondensed milk for Union Army field rations.

But great ideas often lead to terrible ones— in this case, the Essence of Coffee. Food engineers wondered, "Hey, if we can successfully evaporate a glass of milk, then why not an entire cup of coffee?"

This was no trivial matter. The Union Army thrived on coffee, as Jon Grinspan explained in his New York Times article "How Coffee Fueled the Civil War." It was their "nerve tonic" and sustainer. Gen. Benjamin Butler even considered it a decisive strategic factor, notes Grinspan. The modernization of coffee was nothing short of the modernization of the war effort itself.

And so George Hummel unleashed the Essence of Coffee on an unsuspecting world, evaporating vast quantities of coffee — complete with Borden's condensed milk and sugar — into what is often described as a thick, brown sludge or a noxious, black grease. By all accounts, Union soldiers abhorred the stuff, and these were men who, according to Grinspan, would brew coffee with water

from "brackish bays and Mississippi mud, liquid their horses would not drink" if that's what it took to sharpen their nerves and minds on the whetstone of holy caffeine.

Despite the label's insistence that the product was "celebrated" and "more wholesome than pure coffee," the Essence of Coffee tested even the standards of these hardened soldiers. If that weren't bad enough, the men's already super-charged bowels were sometimes further corrupted by spoiled milk sold by sketchy dairymen, according to writer David A. Norris. So attempts to cut the reconstituted essence with "fresh" milk could prove a risky gamble.

The Essence of Coffee was soon removed as a ration, but its reputation lingered, according to John D. Wright, author of "The Language of the Civil War." In recent years, a few determined (and potentially masochistic) Civil War re-enactors have attempted to recreate the stuff with mixed results. While some claim to have improved on the recipe and concocted something "really quite good," others report the creation of a tough taffy that must be broken up with a rifle butt on cold days before boiling.

Can anything good be said for the Essence of Coffee? According to historian James T. Hickey, first lady Mary Todd Lincoln may have incorporated the stuff into a high-caffeine, molasses-sweetened concoction to treat her frequent migraines. Plus, Union soldiers who could stomach the stuff undoubtedly got their fix, a jolt of psychoactive stimulation that helped push them toward victory in the War Between the States.

So think about that the next time your barista serves you a less-than-perfect pumpkin spice soy latte. At least you're not forced to endure "the essence."

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Did you know there are normally more yellow Skittles in every bag? Here's why...

03:03, 12 Nov 2016

thesun.ie

Did you know there are normally more yellow Skittles in every bag? Here's why...



Main Image

Reddit users have been in uproar after one revealed that Skittles almost always contain more yellow sweets than they should Imgur

YOUR bag of Skittles may contain the entire rainbow, but the colourful sweets aren't evenly shared out between packets.

In fact, there's a strong chance that next time you tuck into a bag of the popular sweets, you'll find that you have far more yellow Skittles than any other colour.

A Reddit user has been busy conducting an experiment to find out what exactly is in each bag of Skittles, and users on the message board are certain that there's a yellow bias.



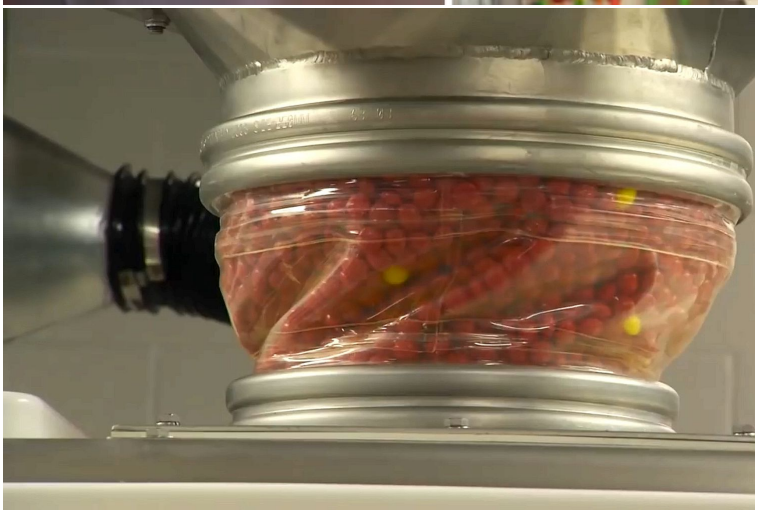




Whilst theories have been flying around as to why yellows are so common, one possible reason could be revealed by footage of inside a Skittles factory.

This clip shows the tasty treats bouncing around conveyor belts and being sorted into packets, but look closely and you'll spot something odd.

Before they are bagged, Skittles are sorted into colour coded vats, but yellows keep sneaking where they don't belong



Before they are bagged, Skittles are sorted into colour coded vats, but yellows keep sneaking where they don't belong

At one point in the production process, the sweets are all contained in individual vats, sorted by their colour.

But rogue yellows seem to have made their way into many of these vats, with the lemon-flavoured sweets visible in all the colour coded pouches.

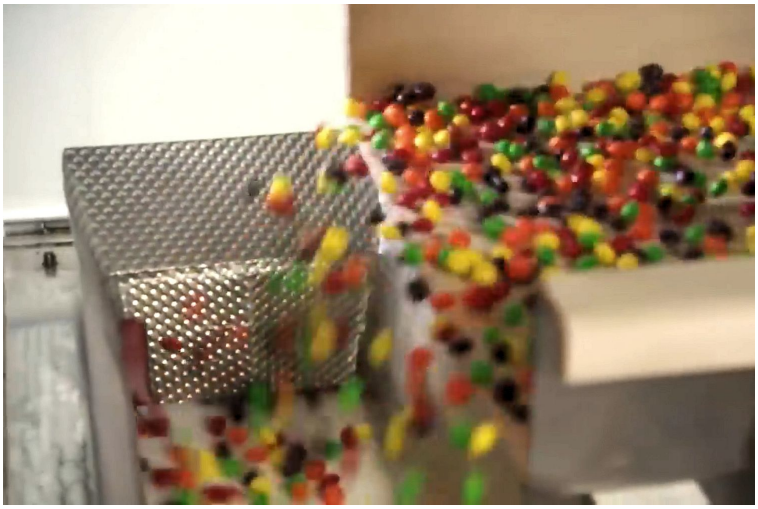
Another still from inside the factory shows a rogue yellow Skittle among a bag of greens YouTube / Scott Viau

This suggests that something about the production process makes yellow Skittles more likely to fall into the wrong section when they're being sorted by their colour.

And although the colour distributions are meant to be even, the extra yellow Skittles lurking in all the other vats mean that the citrus sweets are far more common than they should be.



Another still from inside the factory shows a rogue yellow Skittle among a bag of greens



When the sweets come to be sorted into bags, these extra yellows end up sneaking in where they shouldn't be



Other Skittles lovers have suggested that the addition of extra yellows is a cost-saving ploy

YouTube / Scott Viau

When the sweets come to be sorted into bags, these extra yellows end up sneaking in where they shouldn't be YouTube / Scott Viau

But the theory that the extra yellows are included by accident isn't enough for some Reddit users, who started chipping in with theories of their own.

One wrote: "I can tell you from personal experience that there's always more yellow. It's not just for skittles, it's the same for pretty much every multi-flavored candy.

"Whatever flavored is the least liked by everyone, which is usually the yellow/lemon one, is ALWAYS in a greater abundance than the rest of the flavors. I think it's like, a law of physics or something."

Other Skittles lovers have suggested that the addition of extra yellows is a cost-saving ploy YouTube / Scott Viau

Another suggested: "Well the yellow dye may be their biggest order and they just make orange by mixing some yellow and red dye (instead of buying separate orange dye), and because of the bigger starting vats of yellow they may end up making more yellow towards the end of a batch to clean out the vats and start fresh."

This news comes in a bad year for sweet-toothed Brits, after we revealed that Toblerones are shrinking, and have a bizarre new shape.

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Priests flee from a devil of a job heraldsun.com.au

Herald Sun

Jamie Seidel, News Corp Australia Network
October 19, 2016 7:44pm



Dateline explores the increasing demand for exorcisms in Italy.

THE world is under renewed attack by an army of demons, and the battle is so intense young priests are too scared to engage in exorcisms, says a 79-year-old Vatican exorcist.

Father Vincenzo Taraborelli told the BBC he treats up to 30 people a day in his windowless room at the back of a church in Rome.

He says he cannot retire as he cannot find a replacement: "I told the bishop that I can't find anyone willing to do this. Many of them are scared. Even priests can be scared. It's a difficult life."

Demonic possession is said to occur when an agent of the devil, Satan, enters a body. Sometimes many different demons with different characteristics supposedly co-inhabit the same person, directing their behaviour towards evil and dragging their soul to hell upon death..

In 2014, the Vatican officially recognised the International Association of Exorcists. The group had been established in the 1990s to promote awareness of the "dramatic reality of exorcism".

Its founder, Father Gabriele Pietro Amorth, died in Rome last month, aged 91. He claimed to have conducted 160,000 exorcisms.



A 2005 file photo of Don Gabriele Amorth, exorcist in the diocese of Rome and the president of honour of the Association of Exorcists. Picture: AFP

He said his most difficult case was a married woman, whose demons he battled for 13 years.

"Another man, who was a Satanist, wanted her," he told the BBC. "She refused. So this man told her: 'You'll pay for this.' He cast so-called spells to attract her to him, twice a week.

"Then they came to me, in this room. I started to pray, and she went into a trance. She would blurt out insults, blasphemies. I quickly understood she was possessed.

"As the rite continued, she started feeling worse and worse. So when I told the devil: 'In the name of Jesus, I order you to go away', she started to vomit little metal pins, five at a time."

It's a message being seized upon by religious media groups.

An article today in Catholic Online asserts "WORLD UNDER ATTACK — Army of demons has led to spike in exorcisms".

"The most alarming fact is that exorcists, who were once uncommon and saw little work, are no longer able to keep up with the sudden demand," it reads.



The ancient rite of exorcism is a common subject of religious artwork over the centuries. Here, Saint Benedict is exorcised in a painting by Spenello Aretino in the late 1300s.

"All it takes is a little opening. A dabbling in the occult or paganism is all. Perhaps an experimentation with a Ouija board, or some other dalliance is all the devil needs."

Christian Today reports the number of designated Roman Catholic exorcists in the United States has grown from 12 to 50 in the past 10 years.

Father Amorth told the Sunday Telegraph in 2004 that he regularly spoke with the Devil.

"I speak with the Devil every day. I talk to him in Latin. He answers in Italian. I have been wrestling with him, day in day out, for 14 years," he said.

Amorth became famous after claiming the Harry Potter book and movie series encouraged the black arts.

Father Taraborelli is equally adamant of the reality of demons.

"Someone who believes knows that the devil exists, you can read it in the gospel," he said. "Then you only need to see how the world is nowadays. It has never been this bad. These violence acts are not human. So terrible ..."

Originally published as Priests flee from a devil of a job

- News Corp 2016 Copyright

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ZEBRA CROSSINGS - THE DAY I MET A ZORSE, A ZONKEY, AND A ZEEDONK!

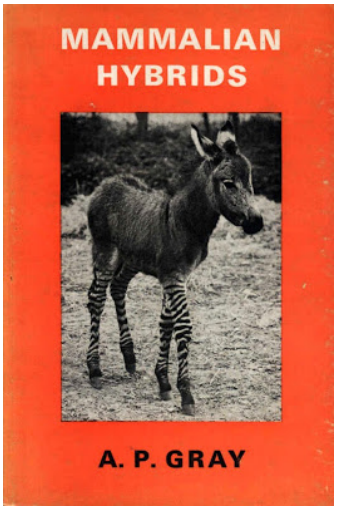
blogspot.com



Dr KARL SHUKER

Monday, 9 April 2012

ZEBRA CROSSINGS - THE DAY I MET A ZORSE, A ZONKEY, AND A ZEEDONK!



***Mammalian Hybrids*, 2nd edition (1971) – its front cover depicts a young zebronkey at Colchester Zoo**

Back in the early 1970s, when still a child, I read with great interest that Colchester Zoo in Essex had on display a remarkable creature known as a zonkey or zebronkey – a hybrid of zebra and donkey. Sadly, however, even though my parents took me to numerous zoos all over Britain during my childhood and teenage years, somehow we never did visit Colchester's, and as there were no such hybrids anywhere else in the country at that time, this meant that I never did see one of these fascinating animals.

All of that changed a mere 40-odd years later, however, when, just over a week ago, on Saturday 31 March 2012, to be exact, I had the great pleasure of visiting Donkey Rescue UK, based just outside Bridgnorth in Shropshire. For here, not only did I finally see a zonkey, I was also fortunate enough to see a zeedonk and a zorse.

Zulu, Donkey Rescue UK's beautiful zorse (Dr Karl Shuker)

But what exactly are zorses, zonkeys, and zeedonks, not to mention zebroids, zebryls, zeehorses, zebrulas, zebrasses, zebrets, zonies, hebras, donkras, quorses, and a host of other equally strange-sounding equids on record, and how do they (or do they) all differ from one another? Let me now explain – or try to!

The terminology for zebra *Equus* spp. x domestic horse *E. caballus*, zebra *Equus* spp. x domestic donkey *E. asinus*, and the respective reciprocal crosses is nothing if not confusing, to say the very least. For instance: in the past, 'zebroid' was usually applied to zebra x horse crossbreeds in either



direction, but is nowadays most commonly used as a generic term for all equid hybrids featuring zebras.

'Zorse' is the term most widely applied to any ♂zebra x ♀horse hybrid (other terms in use for this hybrid type are 'zebrula', 'zebrule', 'zebryl', 'zeehorse', 'zebra mule', and 'golden mule'). The rarer reciprocal cross (♂horse x ♀zebra) is known as a hebra, horbra, zebrinny, or zebret. And the offspring of a ♂zebra and a ♀pony is a zony.

The terms 'zonkey' and 'zeedonk' can be found commonly in use as generic terms for all zebra x donkey hybrids. Moreover, 'zonkey' is also applied more specifically as a term for ♂zebra x ♀donkey hybrids. Other terms for these include 'zebronkey' (aka 'zebonkey'), and 'zebrass'. Similarly, 'zeedonk' is also applied more specifically to the much less common reciprocal cross; another term for this latter hybrid is 'donkra'.

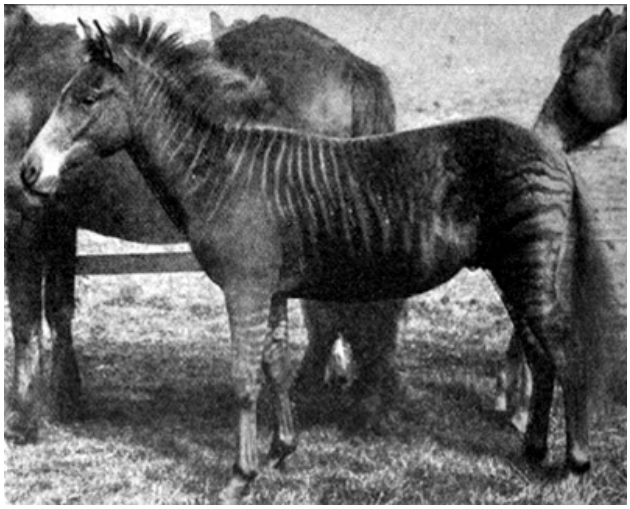
ZULU'S A ZORSE, OF COURSE, OF COURSE!

The first of the three zebroids that I encountered at Donkey Rescue UK was a beautiful zorse, called Zulu. Almost five years old, Zulu is currently the only zorse in the UK, and came here from the USA. His father is a Grant's zebra *Equus quagga boehmi* (a subspecies of the plains zebra) and his mother is a grey Arab horse. As can be seen in my photos, his black stripes overlay his coat's brown background colouration, and although this will fade to grey in years to come, his stripes will remain black. Apparently his senses are more acute than those of a horse.



Zulu the zorse at Donkey Rescue UK (Dr Karl Shuker)

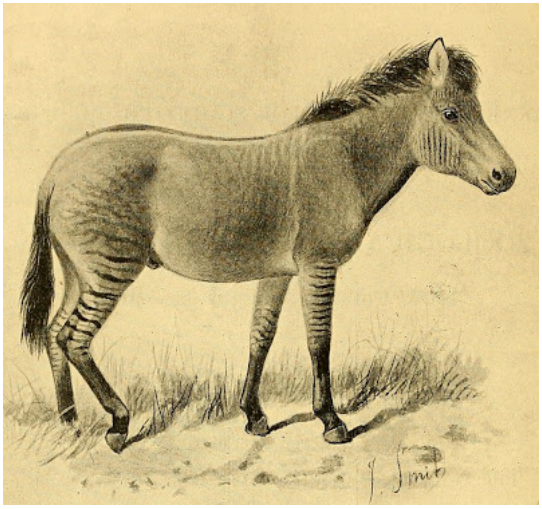
Zorses are by no means a modern-day creation. On the contrary, they were being bred as long ago as the 19th Century. One notable example from that period was a very handsome male specimen called Romulus, as seen here when photographed as a one-year-old in 1899.



Romulus, a zorse from 1899

Moreover, zonies bred by mating Chapman's zebras *E. q. chapmani* with ponies were utilised by the Boers during the South African Wars (1879-1915) as transport animals,

particularly for hauling heavy guns. One of these zonies, captured by British forces, was presented by Lord Kitchener to King Edward VII, which the king in turn placed in the Zoological Society of London's care on 19 July 1902, by which time it was two years old. The following illustration of this zony appeared in the Society's *Proceedings* for 1903:



The zony given to the Zoological Society of London by Edward VII

Even so, zorses didn't attract widespread public attention until the late 1940s, following the successful breeding of Grevy's zebra *E. grevyi* x horse hybrids on the farm of African explorer Raymond Hook, situated near to Nanyuki in Kenya. It all began when Hook captured an 18-month-old male Grevy's zebra in 1944, and introduced it to his farm's herd of horses. The young zebra was soon adopted by one of the herd's mares acting as a foster mother, it grew to adulthood, and from the age of six until its retirement 14 years later it regularly mated with various of the mares to yield a continuing supply of Grevy's zorses. In 1955, the first of these (born in 1949) was sold to an exhibition in Florida called 'Africa USA', where it received notable publicity, so afterwards Hook sold many more Grevy's zorses to zoos and parks worldwide.

In general appearance, a Grevy's zorse possesses its mother's background coat colouration. However, its father's characteristic fine striping is readily apparent upon its face and legs, and to varying extents upon its body too, running down from the dark line along its spine almost as far as its pale underparts.

In contrast, a Grevy's hebra - bred from the reciprocal cross ((♂horse x ♀Grevy's zebra) - exhibits a less pronounced degree of striping.

Zorses and hebras bred from other zebra species have comparable appearances to their respective Grevy's-bred counterparts, although their limbs actually possess more stripes than those of their pure-bred zebra parent if they have been sired by a stallion belonging to any of the subspecies of the plains zebra *E. quagga* [=*burchelli*].

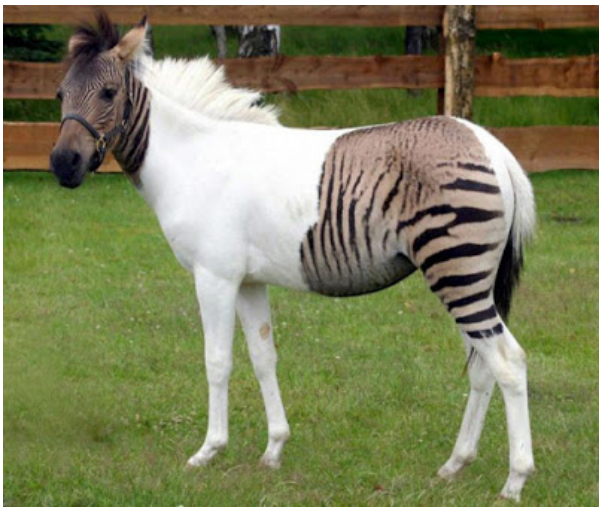
If a patterned horse, such as a roan, Apaloosa, pinto, piebald, or skewbald, is mated with a zebra, the hybrid offspring possesses stripes, but usually only on the non-white areas. If the horse was chestnut or bay, some exceptionally beautiful hybrids known as golden zorses or golden zebras can result.

A golden zorse – the exquisite progeny of a zebra and a chestnut/bay horse

Perhaps the most celebrated hebra on account of its extremely unusual, eyecatching coat patterning is Eclyse, born during 2007 at a safari park at Schloss Holte Stukenbrock, Germany, to a ♂horse and a ♀zebra. Her father, a tobiano pinto, has sizeable areas of white coat colouration, and as these result from the expression of a dominant depigmentation gene, Eclyse inherited this same gene and bears comparable white areas on her own coat. As a result, the striping that she inherited



from her zebra mother is confined to her coat's pigmented (i.e. non-depigmented) areas, thus creating her exceptional degree of non-continuous patterning.



Eclyse, probably the most eyecatching zebra x horse hybrid ever seen

Grevy's zorses and hebras are invariably sterile, for whereas the horse possesses 64 chromosomes (32 pairs), Grevy's zebra only has 46 chromosomes (23 pairs), with the resulting hybrid possessing 55 chromosomes (27 pairs plus a single unpaired chromosome). The differences in chromosome numbers are also marked between the horse and the other two zebra species. Even so, there is some evidence to suggest that fertile female hybrids bred from horses and Chapman's zebras are occasionally fertile.

In addition to selling Grevy's zorses to zoos, Raymond Hook used some in place of mules (♂donkey x ♀horse hybrids) as pack animals on his farm, and he discovered not only that they were blessed with more agreeable temperaments than pure-bred Grevy's zebras but also that they worked as efficiently as mules. Similarly, zorses bred from Chapman's zebras and again used for pack work in their native lands have proven to be strong, active, and intelligent, as well as being more resistant than horses to sleeping sickness spread by tsetse flies.

In view of such commendable attributes, it is quite likely that in the future zorses will eventually become recognised more for their practical usefulness than for their current popularity as engaging zoo and park exhibits. And indeed, they are currently being bred in Africa for use in trekking on Mount Kenya.

ZAMBI THE ZONKEY

In recent times, the zorse type most frequently displayed in zoos is probably the version bred from Grant's zebra, such as Zulu. Yet even this is far less often on show than zonkeys or zebronkeys, i.e. hybrids bred from ♂zebras and ♀donkeys – of which Zambi at Donkey Rescue UK is a delightful example. Others include the zebra x donkey hybrids bred at Colchester Zoo from the early 1970s onwards, the last of which, a female called Shadow, died at the ripe old age of 34 on 3 April 2009.



Zambi the zonkey at Donkey Rescue UK (Dr Karl Shuker)

Arriving here in December 2011, Zambi has a Grevy's zebra as her father and a Giant Mammoth Jackston donkey as her mother. And as the latter donkey breed is known for its great size, it is possible that when fully grown, Zambi will be the largest zebra x donkey hybrid in existence, or at the very least in Europe, because no other hybrids of her particular parentage are known here at present.

Like all zebronkeys, Zambi is a very handsome, striking animal, due to the marked contrast of such hybrids' donkey-like shape and body colouration with the heavy bands of striping present all down their pale legs. Much fainter stripes are sometimes present upon the body too, as with Zambi.



Zambi has a very striking black-and-white mane (Dr Karl Shuker)

After having finally seen a zebronkey in the flesh, it is easy to understand why more than one writer in the past has labelled this equine hybrid "a donkey in pyjamas"!

Certainly the singularly attractive appearance of zebronkeys, especially when young (as evinced by the incorrigibly cute youngster from Colchester Zoo pictured on the front cover of the 1971 second edition of Annie P. Gray's standard work *Mammalian Hybrids* – see this present ShukerNature post's opening picture), will guarantee their continuing popularity in zoos, parks, and other wildlife centres. Like zorses, zebronkeys are normally sterile, but fertile female specimens have occasionally been reported.

A zonkey (aka zebronkey) at Colchester Zoo in 2004 (Sannse/Wikipedia)

Some Grant's zebronkeys were used in the past as pack animals in Kenya, and proved to be strong workers, but were apparently less intelligent and more difficult to work with than zorses.

A ZEEDONK NAMED ZEE

Described on Donkey Rescue UK's 'Donkey Mixtures' webpage (click **here**) as "very much a zebra – disguised as a donkey!" on account of her very strong and bossy zebra-like personality, Zee was bred in the Netherlands and came to the UK in 2011.




Zee the zeedonk at Donkey Rescue UK (Dr Karl Shuker)

She is the rarest member of Donkey Rescue UK's trio of zebroids because she is an example of the much less common reciprocal cross between zebras and donkeys – a zeedonk or donkra - having a standard donkey as her father and a Grant's zebra as her mother.

A TRIPLE ZEBROID

Rarest of all zebroids, however, must surely be the triple hybrid once exhibited at London Zoo and documented as follows by none other than Charles Darwin in his book *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication* (1868):

"Many years ago I saw in the Zoological Gardens a curious triple hybrid, from a bay mare, by a hybrid from a male ass and female zebra. This animal when old had hardly any stripes; but I was assured by the superintendent, that when young it had shoulder-stripes, and faint stripes on its flanks and legs. I mention this case more especially as an instance of the stripes being much plainer during youth than in old age."

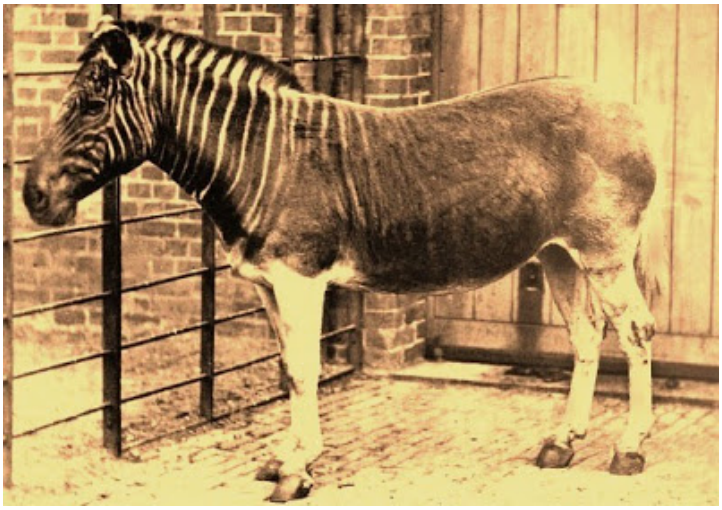
This triple hybrid's father was thus a fertile male donkra, a great rarity in itself.

QUORSES AND HUAGGAS?

If the above-mentioned triple hybrid is the rarest zebroid, then the most controversial zebroids must surely be ones that allegedly featured as one of their parents the now-extinct quagga *E. q. quagga*.

A captive female quagga at London Zoo in 1870, which was the only living quagga specimen ever photographed.

The only partially-striped zebra, being fully striped upon its face, neck, and shoulders, but entirely lacking stripes upon its legs and hind regions, and only faintly striped upon the mid-portion of its body, this very distinctive subspecies of the plains zebra was once common on the veldt of South



Africa. Following persecution at the guns of hunters for its meat and hide, however, it was eventually wiped out entirely in the wild, and the last surviving captive specimen, at Amsterdam Zoo, died in 1883.

Intriguingly, several decades prior to this tragic end, there were several claims of hybrids having been bred between quaggas and horses.



Standing alongside a taxiderm quagga at Tring Natural History Museum (Dr Karl Shuker)

Not everyone accepts these claims, however, believing that the zebras involved were not quaggas but Burchell's zebra *E. q. burchelli*. Having said that, this is a controversy within a controversy, because researches have recently revealed that this unusual zebra subspecies - also known as the bontequagga, characterised by distinctive pale-brown shadow stripes present between the normal dark ones, and allegedly becoming extinct approximately 40 years after the quagga - was not a valid subspecies at all.



Taxiderm specimen of Burchell's zebra at Tring Natural History Museum (Dr Karl Shuker)

Instead, it had merely been based upon aberrantly-patterned individuals belonging to the Damara zebra subspecies, *E. q. antiquorum*, and that some specimens of Damara zebra alive today show precisely the same characteristics as those documented for Burchell's zebra. So even though the latter version never existed as a separate taxonomic form, it is no longer extinct!

Living zebras at Etosha, in Namibia, exhibiting the characteristic appearance of Burchell's zebra

Probably the most famous alleged quagga-derived zebroid is a female hybrid bred in 1815 by Lord Morton (George Douglas, 16th Earl of Morton) from a supposed ♂quagga x ♀chestnut Arab horse

mating.



Unlike zebra x horse hybrids, and quite possibly because there is no absolute confirmation that any ever existed, quagga x horse hybrids have never received their own specific terms. Consequently, for ease of reference in future, and utilising the same system of nomenclature employed in relation to other zebroid types, I propose that a ♂quagga x ♀horse hybrid (whether confirmed or alleged) be referred to hereafter as a quorse, and a hybrid from the reciprocal cross as a huagga.

Although there will be no quorses and huaggas on show there, I can guarantee that if you visit Donkey Rescue UK, you will have a thoroughly enjoyable experience, with the chance to see not only its three remarkable zebroids but also a number of other very engaging equids, including Mammoth Jackstock donkeys (the world's largest breed of donkey), an adorable young shaggy-haired Livre A Baudet du Poitou Jack donkey from France, and a Mediterranean miniature donkey, as well as some beautiful horses and ponies. So please check out their website **here** and pay them a visit one weekend – you won't be disappointed!

My photographs of its zebroids are included here by kind permission of Donkey Rescue UK.



At Tring with a taxiderm quagga (Dr Karl Shuker)

2 comments:

1. jehanbosch30 October 2015 at 05:04

With all due respect but a fertile male is genetically impossible. And i reject Darwin's quasi-divine status.However, i did receive a report about a fertile zebra x horse hybrid FEMALE that looks convincing. Nevertheless, i could not get hold of any pictures..J.

- Dr Karl Shuker30 October 2015 at 05:31

Thanks for your comment. I agree that male hybrids are usually - but not invariably - sterile. Rare exceptions have been confirmed, and I have not encountered any verified disproving of darwin's statement re the above-mentioned three-species equine hybrid.

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Cops post warnings about Zika virus in meth

local10.com

By Jeff Tavss - Executive Producer
Posted: 11:17 AM, September 08, 2016 Updated: 11:17 AM, September 08, 2016

BATH, Mich. - The Zika virus is actually up to some good.

A police department is using the threat of the virus to help stop drug abuse among its residents.

The Bath Police Department in Michigan posted a warning to its Facebook account alerting citizens of "breaking news" that meth possibly contains the Zika virus.

The department generously added that anyone who had recently purchased meth could bring the drugs to the station and the police would test it for the virus.

The post also urged everyone to "Please SHARE so everyone knows" and that safety is their #1 priority.

Here's some breaking news: There is no link between Zika and meth.

While most followers got the joke, others were not so kind.

"You have got to be kidding me!" exclaimed one Facebook follower. "If they are stupid enough to be using it, let them pay the consequences. Use the tax dollars for more important things."

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